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**黒の魔王**

VIII

赤

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**FREEDOM NOVEL**

# **Kuro no Maou**

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# Chapter 119 – Cyprus

## Mercenary Group Annihilated

Was it a dream or an illusion, to have seen that figure again?

“That girl is.....”

It was about one week ago when I went to Irz for applying the scorched earth tactics that the enemy scout squad had attacked.

The scout troop was made with 7 people. Among them, there was one girl who seemed like a misfit there, I certainly remember her.

She had been able to climb over the wall we had created to trap them, but she should have been burned to ashes after getting attacked by Fiona’s fire magic.

But, that supposedly dead girl, with blond twintails and wearing a bow, could be clearly seen in my view.

But by the time I became aware of her, she got hit by a lightning magic attack and disappeared after falling down the log and into the river.

“Did I see wrong? No, she was definitely—“

But in the Rone river in front of me, let alone her, there are no mercs left either.

They, who had recklessly attacked without any support from the crusaders, took huge casualties and had run away just now.

It seems they had prepared at least logs to cross the river but they were nothing more than floating supports, they didn’t really increase the speed in crossing the river much.

It only increased their chances of not drowning even when hit by lightning arrows.

But it didn’t have any effect on the result of the battle. And now,

the bombardment had once again begun.

“I guess it’s no use thinking about that girl anymore.”

I had only seen her for an instant. It must be some kind of mistake, or misunderstanding. There’s even a chance that it was a twin or a look-alike as well.

What I need to think is not about that but how to deal with this bombardment.

“The enemy has retreated! We should also hurry up and withdraw! Be careful of the fireballs. Magicians, use defensive magic shields to cover as much as possible!!”

With the sound of agreement, the adventurers deployed in front of the protective wall once again evacuated towards the guild.

“Pull carefully and quickly! If this got blown up it’ll be all over!!”(Mozrun)

Mossan and the 2 goblins quickly pulled the carriage on which the machinegun was kept.

I once again realized that it was a good decision to have not fixed it at a single place and made it movable through carriages.

During the bombardment it can be kept safe like this in the guild’s storage.

“What’s the damage report?”

I asked for the report through Lily’s telepathic network.

To be able to talk handsfree both ways is really convenient.

On my question, the reply quickly came inside my head.

“Deceased 1. Injured 3. Slightly injured ones are in dozens but they’ll soon become perfect after receiving healing.”

“I see. Quickly get to treating them.”

Another one died.

Even without hearing the report, I did see one of the arrows fired by the mercs striking down an adventurer near the protective wall.

Probably, it was fired to attack me who was firing bullets with my magic bullet arts.

If the arrow had gone as it was aimed and hit me; a single arrow wouldn't really have been any trouble for me.....I feel regretful but I can't let that depress me.

For the person who took the arrow in place of me as well, I must continue fighting.

Mourning for dead will come after all this is over.

“But, it seems they really were used as sacrificial pawns.”

It was anti-climatic how we so quickly were able to repel them off.

Although I don't know what the enemy was thinking to make the mercs so uselessly attack like this, I do feel pity for them.

But that doesn't mean I'm going to show any kind of mercy to someone who tries to cross this river.

And, bombardment continued for the whole day and there was no other attack. And so, we had protected the defensive line for the 3rd day.

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“The Cyprus mercenary group seems to have been annihilated. Only 21 came back alive. And along with the leader Cyprus, most of the original members have gone missing.”

Norz gave a smile after hearing Sister Sylvia's report.

“I see. It’s refreshing to think that grinning face is now at the bottom of the river.”

Norz had always felt unpleasant about the fact that he had to take that group of mercs with him since the Cardinal Mercedes had ordered so directly.

It would have been one thing if he had hired them himself because he considered it necessary, but there was no way he would silently accept it just because his superior asked him to take them with him.

On top of that, the leader Cyprus had a personality who liked fooling around. There was no way such a guy would be able to build good relationships with anyone, let alone the short tempered Norz.

“But, is that fine? To just use them and throw them away like that? In a situation where you hid most of the info regarding the defences of the village, isn’t it as good as deceiving them?”

When Norz had asked Cyprus to attack the village he quickly received ‘OK!’ from Cyprus and did not tell anything about the ‘attack of the Devil’ or about the strong resistance showed by the demons.

“Cardinal Mercedes had only asked me to take them to Pandora continent with me. He didn’t ask me to bring them back alive as well.”(norz)

“Isn’t that just sophistry?”

“No, regarding their treatment, I was told that I can treat them the same way as any merc group would be as long as I take them with me. There’s no problem even if they got annihilated during their ‘jobs’.”

In the end, Norz had no idea why Cardinal Mercedes had asked him to take this merc group with him, but he had already taken care of that troublesome group, he had no need to think about useless things. He could be happy without hiding anything.

“Is that so? What to do with those who came back alive?”

“Abandon them, is what I want to say but it’ll become troublesome later. Pay them as per the contract and ask them to leave. They’re just impertinent mercenaries, after facing something like that, they’ll happily go back.”

“Then, as you say.”

Sylvia completed the decree quickly and gave it to one of the soldiers.

With this, the order would be executed as per Norz’s will. Since they, the employer, was obediently paying them, there won’t be any problems from their side.

“But, that ‘Devil’s’ attack really is troublesome.”

Norz knit his brows. After seeing the mercs being pulverised under the enemy’s crossfire, he once again realized the power of that attack.

“Since they were able to use it today as well without any problems, it means that there’s no use limit or time limit on it.”

The limit Sylvia talked about wasn’t regarding the number of bullets or the barrel that needed to bear exhaustion while firing.

It was regarding a more stronger, magical limit that exists in this world.

For example, just as how Lily could only return to her normal form during full moon nights, there were magical limits like a specified time, period, season, or the positioning of the stars, only during which an ability could be shown.

It also included using magic items or special catalyst that could not be used again after one use.

Only, the stronger and stricter the limit was, the effect would be proportionately larger. Even if the crossfire was an extremely powerful attack, it was not a large scale magic that would require a certain limit it seems, or so Sylvia believed.

If she were to guess, it was a magic that could be used easily without much labour or effort.

“umu, if you say that it’s a completed magic with no specific weakness, then it can’t be helped. Attacking from the front will be the best way. Above all, we still have an overwhelming number of troops still remaining. Also, that attack had stopped for some time in between, that means it can’t be used infinitely.”(norz)

“That would be so. If repeated twice or thrice, the interval should also get bigger. As long as we don’t think about our damages, we should be able to overwhelm them with sheer numbers.”

They didn’t have any definite proof but considering the theory of magic and the situation, it was the most plausible situation. Norz also agreed to it.

“Aa, oh right, what happened to those reinforcements that Bishop Gregorius was sending?”

On the basis of the ‘prediction’ that was sent a few days earlier, it had been written that some reinforcements were sent this way.

“We have not received any report that such a squad has arrived or is approaching as of yet. As long as it isn’t a lie, these reinforcements sure seem to be moving very leisurely.”

“fun, I don’t care either ways. I don’t want to keep a weird squad near me. It’d be better if they didn’t come at all.”

“Is that so? Either way, no new squad will come here till the next attack at least.”

“fuh, the next attack, eh?”

Reacting to those words, Norz gave a smile similar to a carnivorous animal.

“Tomorrow, no, day after tomorrow, the preparations to cross the river will be complete and we shall once again go on the attack. Being delayed for 5 days, we will have bare enough time to catch those demons that those bastards allowed to run away but—“

Norz's smile was mixed with delight to trample those demons, which had made him suffer a loss.

“—fuhaha, this time definitely, I'll exterminate those annoying damned demons.”

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The next day, the 5th of Hatsubi.

That day no mercs came to attack us recklessly like yesterday and the bombardment continued without showing any signs of stopping and the Crusaders themselves showed no movement.

Since some part of the barbed wires and fence had blown away due to the bombardment, we had gone out to repair it.

For some reason, the enemy didn't seem to care about it and except for the bombardment; we were able to smoothly finish the repairs.

Actually, I wanted to blacken our defensive line as well like the guild but Mossan was unable to cast [Eternity] property on it so the effect of blackening could not be maintained. So I had no choice but to leave it as it is.

At the same time, thanks(?) to the bombardment, the underground supply and escape route prepared beforehand came to good use.

If the soldiers had directly attacked like the first day, there was no need to transfer items underground but if the enemy was bombarding us from a long range, then it was a different matter.

Although it might be impertinent to call it an underground passage as it was nothing more than a well camouflaged trench. But as long as the fireballs didn't fall from directly overhead the passage, it could protect against the flames. On top of which, since it hid the supple squad, there was no chance of getting sniped either.

It would have been fine to carry the items during the night when the bombardment stops but the enemy still kept on observing us, so it was obviously better to use the sure safe underground passage.

But still, even though this bombardment really is annoying, the adventurers in the guild along with Vulcan were surprisingly obedient and calm.

I had resolved myself to plan a surprise attack against the magicians doing the bombardment no matter how reckless it was if their displeasure became unbearable but it ended up being a needless anxiety on my side.

While thinking that, I once again slept for 2 hours and ended my day.

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And on the next morning, after completing their river crossing preparations, the day of attacking finally came.

Alsace defensive battle, it's fated conclusion began on the 6th of Hatsubi.

# Chapter 120 – ReAttack

6th of Hatsubi.

I woke up at midnight. The bombardment began at dawn and continued till sunset. After that, the fireballs stop raining for that period of time.

On the roof of the guild, while looking at the clear night sky that could not be seen in modern Japan, I wait for dawn.

Since nothing happened yesterday, they will definitely come for us today. I estimated that, so when I saw the enormous group of Crusaders at sunrise, I wasn't really surprised.

“Everyone, get to battle positions. Today, the enemy will definitely not fall back and will definitely attack us to defeat us with all their might.”

As I felt the presences of the adventurers running around after receiving my orders, I gazed at the long white line of Crusaders that had appeared with sunrise.

Infantry with sharp pointed spears, magicians with long staves with dazzling magic gems embedded in it, heavy armoured knights wrapped in complete armour and the Pegasus Knights that flew in the air composed with the sun behind their backs. Each and every one of them, approached us in a straight line to stab that flag with the emblem of their cross on this land.

Probably today, an immense amount of blood will flow. We might be annihilated if we mess up even slightly. I felt that much pressure from the white army that approached from the horizon.

But we won't retreat, we cannot retreat. That's right, to save as many as I can, to kill as many of those devils as I can, I am here.

“—Let's go.”

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Norz moved through the north west highway towards Alsace village with the same amount of vigour as 4 days ago.

“Oi, how’s the situation upstream?”

“Yes! There are no signs of any enemy magician, also there doesn’t seem to be construction there either.”

Listening the report of the scouts that just returned, Norz seemed satisfied.

During the first attack he had fallen into their trap but he won’t allow something like that to happen again.

Only, he had been vigilant of that inundating tactic from the very start and the current report was only one final confirmation.

The weather was clear today. There was no chance of sudden rains that could make the river overflow.

Facing that clear blue sky, only that black box felt as if it still clad in the night and was a symbol of the thorough resistance of the demons.

Even if it was a low level magic, it had remained unscratched even after 4 days of bombardment. Everyone here was already aware of its sturdiness.

But, starting with Norz, every Crusader here believed that today they will definitely remove the existence of that black box from the face of the earth.

“The enemy has no plans, and the preparations for river crossing have been completed.”

On the banks of the Rone river, the magician squad and the heavy armoured knight squad had been spread out.

In the last battle, there were numerous deaths among the magicians deployed on the riverbanks by accurate attacks that blew off their heads.

Being vigilant about that, they had first ensured a safety zone with the help of numerous defensive magics and were smoothly and quickly moving the squad towards the Rone river.

“With this, we can show our full strength.”

Since the bridge had fallen, neither of those squads could cross the river but now a raft floated on the river which could definitely allow them to cross through the river.

The raft was a hastily made one and was not something that was good to look at, but at the very least it had enough capability to cross the river safely.

“Now is the time, we shall show our strength to those damned evil demons!!”

The order of attack resounded.

Here, once again, the curtains rose on the deathly struggle between the Crusaders and the Adventurers.

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As expected, this the time the Crusaders had come with full preparations.

“Even though I knew but still this is unbelievable.....”

Yes, I had already expected this.

But still, the number of rafts prepared was enough to cover the whole shore.

And the ones who rode it were the heavy armoured knights that had not appeared after the first day and the magicians that had been bombarding us till now.

Both of them were squads who could not cross through the river without the bridge. But now that the rafts had been prepared, they could also come over here.

Although I hoped that all of their heavy knights had died during the bridge exploding trap but I guess I was asking for too much as my hopes were clearly betrayed here.

From what I can see, it seems they might have 2 or 3 more heavy knight squads still.

“What are we going to do? Arrows and low level magic isn’t going to work on them.”

Just as Irina said, that armour possesses defensive strength stronger than it looks. And the magician squad had deployed numerous defensive magics which couldn’t be broken through from just long range attacks.

Till now, since the magicians could not cross the river, they could only cover the infantry on half of the river with their defensive magic but if they rode on the rafts, even our protective wall will come inside their effective range.

Considering that are being protected by god knows how many magic shields, I don’t know how many of them can we kill with our crossfiring.

Conversely speaking, if only we could take care of these two squads, we’ll make through this.

As expected the cavalry troops can’t crossover with just a raft and the Pegasus knights will be held back by Lily, although only for 30 mins.

“For the time being, they seem to be sending their heavy knights and magicians in the front—“

I gave a fleeting glance from atop the guild's roof.

I can't see from here, but she's definitely there.

“—first of all, let's take down as many as we can.”

Crossing through Lily's telepathic network, I gave the orders for the first attack.

“Fiona.”

“Yes, what is it, Kurono-san?”

“I'm counting on you to use your strongest one.”

After one beat, the reply came.

“Understood. Everyone, please be careful to not get burnt.”

# Chapter 121 – The Golden Sun

Once, I had a teacher in magic.

“Fiona, the power of magic is to be used to protect those people who are precious to you.”

At that time, I remember I replied as such.

“With my power, I still can’t protect sensei I think.”

Meaning, I did not have anyone precious to me other than my sensei.

There’s no way my sensei did not understand the meaning behind it but she laughed and said so.

“Once you leave this place and go to the outside world, you will definitely find people precious enough to you whom you would want to protect.”

Since sensei said that, there was no way that was incorrect.

But, after completing my training as a witch and going to the outside world, even after lots of years, even after attending the [Holy Elysion Magic Academy] where similar magicians gathered, I did not find anyone precious to me.

I wonder if that was my fault.

When I used magic, people shouted ‘Do you want to kill me!?’; when I spoke they would get angry saying ‘Are you fooling around?’.

I wonder if there was any worth in protecting such people.

I don’t know. I can’t understand what Sensei had said to me.

Everyone would not accept me.

Everyone would keep away from me.

Everyone would try to deceive me, trick me, and sometimes even try to kill me.

That's why I was always alone, never talking to anyone, never coming into contact with anyone.

But, that's fine, that's how witches are supposed to be.

That's why I left to travel alone, selfishly, in any way where my feet took me, to places with delicious things.

It was on a whim that I came to the Pandora continent. After resigning as a mercenary at Virginia, without returning back to the Republic, I decided to roam through the Pandora continent that I had never seen. It was truly just a simple whim.

At most, my reason was to find delicious things that I had never eaten before.

But, I ended up meeting him.

“What? So you were awake?”

As I woke up from a slightly long nap, there was a black magician young man with a fairy.

“I understand, I’ll give you something to eat so at least listen to me.”

He gave me a delicious item I had never eaten before.

“Aa, I forgot I hadn’t named myself. I am Kurono.”

“Lily!”(lily)

And so I ended up meeting Kurono-san and Lily-san.

“I want you to make an official party with us.”(lily)

At that time, I had no intention to form a party.

“I know you absolutely suck at controlling your incredible magic but still I’m inviting you.”

On Lily-san's words, I was unable to find a reason to reject her and so I became a member of a party after a long time.

But still, I was still anxious and nervous.

Once they see my ridiculous power, or maybe, due to my slightly weird manner of speaking, they would also leave me. Just as how everyone, except my sensei, had done.

But—

“Then I look forward to working with you Fiona-san. I also welcome you.”(kurono)

“I understand, I'll believe in you. You're already my party member after all.”(kurono)

“Yeah, Fiona's magic is really amazing. I'm glad you're a part of my party.”(kurono)

“Amazing Fiona! We can win against the Crusaders with this! HAHAHAHA!!”(Kurono)

“It's fine, it's the feeling that counts. Then, to deepen the bonds among the members of Element Master, Cheers!!”(kurono)

Before I noticed, my anxiety and nervousness had already disappeared.

“—Sensei, I have also finally found people I find precious to me.”

After the formation of [Element Master], I always felt comfortable.

Not just Kurono-san and Lily-san, before I realized, I had become able to open up to other adventurers as well.

As if it was natural, I also became a proper comrade of the Adventurer Alliance led by Kurono-san.

“That's why, I will protect those dear to me with my magic.”

In my view were humans similar to me. They were approaching like

a swarm.

People of the same land as me, the Syncorea Republic.

Among them there might be people who studied with me during the time I was in the academy.

“But, ‘they’ aren’t what I want to protect.”

Same humans, same homeland, what does it matter?

Heretics, demons, what does it matter?

“What I want to protect is ‘here’.”

As I whispered to myself, inside my head, the voice of the person precious to me resounded.

“Fiona.”(kurono)

“yes, what is it Kurono-san?”

Actually, I didn’t even need to hear him to know what he was going to say.

“I’m counting on you to use your strongest one.”

I’m happy.

I am needed here.

They believe in me.

As long as those feelings get through, I can fight, with my life on the line.

“Understood. Everyone, please be careful to not get burnt.”

I swung the memento I received from my Sensei, the [Ainz Broom] and poured magical energy into it.

The type I’m going to use is obviously my strongest forte, fire magic.

Raising the staff, I began the chant.

It was magic, not belonging to the Model magic, it's a magic technique I came up with. Yes, this my strongest and the only Original magic.

“يمكّنني إنشاء حرق (Burn me and create)”

Its effect was simple and clear.

“يتتصاعد من الزنجر الشرق (The scarlet that rises from the east.)”

I charge as much fire I can create in a single attack.

“فوة الغربية الموت (The crimson that sinks in the west.)”

At the tip of the staff, a ball of compressed fire appeared.

“فوة الغربية الموت (The golden blessing that shines over the heavens and the earth.)”

The small ball grew along with the heat inside of it.

“الشعلة الخالدة إلى الأصلي (That is the primordial and the eternal flame.)”

No matter how much flames I condense into it, its volume just keeps on increasing.

“(Putting that red heat, blue flame, white light, all of it inside the golden fire.)”

Finally, a fireball of around 5m diameter was completed above me.

“(Here, I create the sun that holds my name.)”

This is, the second sun I created that shines upon everything over the earth.

It's name is—

“——[Golden Sun – Aur Soleil].”

Burn everything, to protect those precious to me.

# Chapter 122 – Assault Team Vs Heavy Knights (1)

By the time they realized it, it was already too late.

“Shit! Hurry up and stop it—“

On the roof of the enemy's fort, nicknamed the black box, a giant fireball appearing could be seen by every Crusader spread out on the shores of Rone river.

It was shining and radiating a golden light brighter than gold itself, but it could only be recognised as a ball of fire.

They obviously understood that that this 5m diameter ball of fire was an attack magic aimed towards them.

They were on the other side of the river, they had no way to stop this attack but they didn't have the time to run away either. The only choice left was to defend.

“الجدران بيضاء ناصعة توسيع نطاق الحماية لمنع [Lux Wall Defen]”

The numerous magician squads were already at the riverside or on the rafts.

After becoming alert from the enemy's long range attack, they had already deployed defensive magic. They deployed numerous defences to face against this overly large fire ball.

All the heavy knight squad and the magician squad had been covered inside the defensive magics, at that moment, the fireball moved.

Due to the incredible heat it possessed, the air around the fireball was shaking and it looked as if space itself was being distorted by that fireball.

But, its speed as it made a parabola while flying towards them was extremely slow.

“Now’s our chance, shoot it down!!”

One of the magician squads rapidly attacked the approaching fire ball with Ice Sagita.

Ice and cold air became a blizzard as it approached the fireball.

But, each and every one of them was extinguished before they even reached the fireball. Due to the overwhelming heat, the fireball wouldn’t stop from being attacked by just 10 or 20 ice magic.

“in, incoming——“

Finally, the fireball dived inside the centre of the squads positioned on the river shore.

With so many magicians, their defences were perfect.

Some of the soldiers who unluckily couldn’t be covered with shields might die but the magicians and the heavy knights placed at the centre of the defensive shields would not even get injured, let alone die.

No matter how big it was, it was only one fireball. Yes, the enemy’s attack was only mere one attack.

There’s no way they wouldn’t be able to defend against it. There’s no way their shields would be broken through.

But,

“Oh, G, God, please grant us——“

The ball of flames that approached from the sky felt as if the sun itself had fallen down on them.

If the sun was actually falling, then humans could not do anything about it in the first place.

While praying to their God, they finally understood that death was inescapable.

And thus, the [Golden Sun] burned everything there to nothingness.

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“Wh, what the hell is that!?!?!”

After the light and blast waves had subsided, Norz finally became aware of the scene in front of him.

The scenery near the riverside had changed in a matter of seconds.

The cornerstone of this occupation army, the heavy knight squads and the magician squads, and numerous soldiers were supposed to be positioned over there. But there was not even a shadow remaining there.

The change didn't stop with just the disappearance of the squads. The terrain itself had been changed.

A crater had been created over there as a proof of the destruction that had just occurred.

The water that supposed to be flowing there had completely disappeared and now finally water flowed in with surging waves from upstream to cover the area without water once again as if the river had forgotten to flow for some time.

Soon, the flow of the river calmed down once again, but, the disappeared soldiers didn't come back. There was no way they could have.

“What's going on? With just one attack, something like this——“

The troops had already experienced the nightmare of losing one whole squad instantly once.

But this time, they had lost much more troops at the same place. Norz could not have predicted this.

No matter how strong their opponents were, after all they were nothing more than some few demons holding up inside one rural village. They, who were not even a part of an army, should not have possessed a first class magician squad or an Ancient Weapon either.

Nevertheless, for such a high level annihilating attack to be fired on them; not just Norz, no soldier could have predicted that.

“Please, calm down a bit first.”

A cool voice struck Norz’s mind that was in chaos.

“Sister Sylvia.....why are you here?”

“I’m the vice commander after all, it’s not weird for me to come to the front lines right? Rather than that, you should quickly give new orders or you’ll be unable to cope with it.”

“umu.....yes, it is as you say.”

Shaking his head, Norz forcibly calmed himself down.

He wasn’t the only one who was shocked by what they saw, the troops were the same. If he didn’t give orders quickly, they would be unable to take the offensive once more.

“Quickly retrieve the injured! That fireball was probably the enemy’s trump card, they wouldn’t be able to use it consecutively!!”

On his orders, the soldiers who were dumbfounded began to move in a panic once again.

“Deploy a new squad! We have taken severe damage but we haven’t been annihilated! The attack will continue as planned! Make preparations for the magicians and the Heavy Knights to cross the river!”

“”YES!!””

After he saw the soldiers who had taken orders scatter in different directions, Norz finally recovered his composure as well.

“Damned demons, don’t think we would fall back from something like that!”

“Yes, if we fall back now then we’ll be doing exactly what they want. Since they didn’t use this attack the last time, this attack must have been their trump card as you had said.” (Sylvia)

“Aa, we still have more than enough troops to attack them. If we according to the plan, there will be no change to the fact that we’ll capture Alsace.”

Just like last time, they had taken a severe blow at the beginning but it was still not enough to change the course of battle.

The Crusaders still had a great amount of infantry, magicians, heavy knights, Pegasus Knights, Cavalry etc. to easily complete their task.

Although, this battle had already become a humiliation for Norz which he’d never forget.

“.....but, I will not tolerate a loss. Definitely, I’ll stab our God’s great flag on that annoying black box.”

Norz who was burning with anger inside, gave orders for attack as soon as the preparations were done.

No matter how many casualties may arise due to the demons’ resistance, today he will definitely not retreat. He will win today, he swore to his God.

“Is everyone alright?”

I had already estimated that Fiona’s [Golden Sun – Aur Soleil]’s aftermath would reach even our protective wall so we had already deployed numerous defensive magics with a wide range

beforehand.

Soon reply's indicating their well being came back to me.

And looking through the surroundings, there doesn't seem to be anyone that's injured either. It seems, we were able to keep through it perfectly.

“Amazing.....the enemy squad that had been there till now has completely disappeared.”

I completely agree with Irina's comment.

I had seen it before already, but still I was surprised once again.

“Yeah, it destroyed through shields and armour as if they didn't even exist.”(kurono)

The magicians and the heavy knights that were approaching here with rafts just a few seconds back have completely disappeared.

It did fall directly in the middle of the enemy group after all, I don't even need to know what happened at the centre of the explosion.

“But, it seems the enemy is still eager to attack.”

Once again, the soldiers started coming to the river side.

And maybe because they were cautious of getting sniped, defensive magics have been deployed as well as they floated the rafts to cross the river.

“So it's a war of attrition from her onwards, right?”(irina)

“Yes.”(kurono)

The enemy still hasn't lost all their magicians and heavy knights.

We had decreased quite a lot of their numbers but still they have enough numbers to defeat us.

“Today will be the biggest turning point.”(kurono)

“yes, let’s work hard.” (irina)

My heart calmed a bit as I saw Irina smile.

Ah, I calmed down, meaning, I really must have been nervous till now.

But it can’t be helped. After all, today a lot of lives will be lost and I knew that.

But,

“That’s right, we need to work hard—“

Mine and everyone else have already hardened their resolves.

“—are preparations over?”

As I looked back, The assault team had already gathered with Vulcan at its head.

“Yeah, we are all ready.”

The ones we are going to face off now are the enemies with the strongest defence, the heavy Knights.

They were also elites like the Pegasus Knights that had splendid equipment.

We can’t stop them like we did with the infantry soldiers. Since they have high level of defence, our crossfire won’t be able to deal with them.

Thus, the best way to kill them would be to attack them personally and cut them apart.

“.....Lily, Fiona, can you hear me?”

“Un!”

“yes.”

Using telepathy, I connected with those two.

“Fiona, you did well, leave the rest to us and take a good rest.”

“I’m glad I was of use.”

She must be currently being transported to one of the beds in the guild.

It’ll take some time for her to get up even with the use of magical energy restoring potions.

“Lily, if the Pegasus Knights come, I’ll be counting on you again. But please don’t be reckless and return back before your ‘Divine Protection’ runs out.”

“Un, I’ll be fine!”

“Alright, then, I’ll go on ahead.”

“Yes, take care, Kurono-san.”(Fiona)

“Take care!”(lily)

After getting the boost from their voices, I was already standing near the front gate.

In my right hand was the [Cursed hatchet Hararetsu] and in my left was [Black Ballista replica]. And inside my shadow were countless blackened swords hidden.

“Let’s go!”

As I shouted, I jumped outside the front gate with the assault team.

Arrows, lightning, fire, ice, rained upon the Crusaders who were crossing the river.

But it didn’t reach the heavy knights who were on the rafts.

Only those highly skilled warriors who had mastered magic as well as martial arts were allowed to wear this Full Plate Mail armour.

There was no way, a long range attack of that level would be able to injure them.

“Looks like it was true that that giant explosion was the demons’ trump card.”

“Yeah, those guys from the second squad were really unlucky. There’s no way anything could live after getting hit by that.”

“Let’s take revenge for them and at the same time, the glory they were supposed to have as well.”

Since they believed that the demons had run out of tricks, they were fairly composed.

“Look, those demons have come out themselves.”

In the direction one of the knights pointed, with a black robed man in the front, there was group of various races with differing equipment.

Even if they were of a different race, they could easily infer that those demons were adventurers.

But, that group of adventurers had been able to keep the soldiers in check on the first day, that too without getting any casualties. They were a truly skilled group.

Each and every heavy Knight here knew that this time the adventurers target was them.

“Say, isn’t that man in the black clothes in the front, the rumoured ‘Devil’?”

“yeah, no doubt about it. There is only that skeleton in black clothes on the front lines other than him or so everyone said. Since a human’s wearing that, no doubt that he’s that bastard Devil.”

“hehe, so let’s go ‘exorcise’ that Devil.”

Since he was wearing a helmet, his face couldn't be seen but no doubt he was currently smiling.

"Alright, get down from the rafts! Take formation, we'll scatter the enemies in a single attack!"

As per the orders of the squad commander of the 3rd heavy knight squad, the heavy knights jumped down from the rafts into the shallow areas of the river.

Even with the river's flow, the heavy knights perfectly took their formation and prepared themselves to attack the approach demons.

"Let's go! We'll kill the evil demons and raise the honour of the knights!!"

Raising their halberds, the heavy knight squad, covered in full plate armour and protected by tower shields, raised their war cry and took their first step in order to trample over the Alsace's defensive line.

# Chapter 123 – Assault Team Vs Heavy Knights Squad (2)

That was truly a wall of silvery shining steel.

The heavy knights holding their tower shields, as they approached in a single horizontal line formation, were truly giving off an incredible amount of pressure and intimidation.

“Let’s take the first action, Magic Bullet Arts——“

The [loaded] bullets appeared around me and the target of these pseudo full metal jacket bullets was of course, the wall of silver.

Now, let’s test which one is stronger? My bullets or your prided full plate armour.

“——release all bullets – Full Burst!”

As I swung the [Black Ballista Replica], with black muzzle flashes in mid-air, rushed towards the approaching enemies.

“Iron Guard.”

The heavy knights that quickly sensed my attacks activated defensive martial art skills.

Before the bullets could reach, the already hard and strong armour became even sturdier due to the magical energy released as an effect of the martial art skill.

Unlike the shield, its effects last only a few seconds but if such a defensive skill could be activated in such a short time then they wouldn’t have much trouble in defending against most of the attacks.

“To remain uninjured——Magic Sword Arts.”

The thousand bullets I fired were defended against by their Tower shield.

Although sparks and the sound of metal clashing rose as the bullets struck the shield, there was barely any scratch on them.

Since the bullets had no effect, next I brought out my blackened long swords.

The 10 swords that appeared from my [Shadow Gate] were deployed around me as per my orders.

“It’ll be bad if I’m unable to deal any damage even with these—Pierce through!!”

Rather than materializing items from scratch, it was more effective to enchant existing items through magic.

Even Sariel had to use her own hands to stop my Sword Arts, that’s the proof that it would have been that dangerous to take it head on.

Then, it should have some effect even against these heavy knights with MAX defence.

As per my will, the blackened swords flied like hawks aiming for their prey.

“It works.”

The clash was over in an instant.

The heavy knight in front of me fell and sunk into the river.

Each and every sword took different trajectories and aimed for 1 knight. Even if their shields are strong, that doesn’t mean that their defence is the same from 360 degrees. It was impossible to perfectly protect everything.

And my magic swords cleanly pierced through the helm and pierced through his brain.

“But, the amount of consumption is really high.....”

Unless I use 10 swords at the same time, it was impossible to take down even a single heavy knight.

Even the fallen heavy knight had been able to deflect all other 9 swords, except the one that struck his head, with his shield or halberd or even his armour.

The sword that struck his armour had been able to leave damage but it had been unable to pierce through in a single attack.

I guess it's a relief that at least the armour is weaker than the shield, if only slightly.

"In any case, it doesn't change the fact that this is going to be a difficult battle."

Even with the [Kuronagi] of the cursed hatchet in my right hand, I don't think I'll be able to cut them into two easily.

The magic bullets of my baton; if I were to boost its hardness rather than the number of bullets, 3 bullets should be able to pierce through the weakened portion of the armour if I hit with perfect accuracy.

And behind me, once again, 10 blackened swords appeared from within my shadow. I still have quite a lot of stock of blackened swords left with me but I can't be reckless with their use.

Among the 10 swords I used, half of them were chipped when they struck their strong guard and the blackening affect was removed.

If the black magical energy covering the sword got dispelled, obviously I lose control over those swords. And in such a situation, it'll be quite difficult to pick them up and enchant them once again.

"It's a formidable enemy, but——"

The heavy knight squad covered the gap created by me in their formation quickly without getting flustered and kept on advancing with the same pace.

Soon, we'll be in a distance where we can clash our blades with them. After that it'll come down to a close combat battle between us, assault team and the heavy knights.

“Bring it on! Don’t move back even a single step! Let’s show these scrap iron knights the will of us adventurers!!”

# Chapter 124 – Fairy Vs Pegasus Knights (4)

(Lily POV)

“—they’re here.”

There are enemy presences in the air. If one were to say that, they could only be talking about the Pegasus Knights.

This time they arrived even faster than last time, just as Kurono had said. They really are going all out this time.

“Disconnecting Telepathy. After that, please use analog comm., alright?”

After informing the adventurers instead of Kurono who was busy fighting on the front lines, I quickly opened the windows and flew to the skies.

My body is already in my normal form, condition is also not bad either. Although the sound from bombardment was really annoying but in my child form I was still able to sleep well.

“Hurry up and come here, I have a time limit after all.”

As I soared above Alsace Village, I saw the Pegasus Knights flying towards here in a formation.

They are clearly on guard against me. I guess I won’t be able to surprise attack them with [Meteor Strike] like last time.

Last time, maybe I should have showed myself as a bit more weaker to make them drop their guards at least a bit.

I had been able to take the initiative with the surprise attack, and I was also able to see through their plans with my powerful Extra magic telepathy.

But, although I had maintained a superior position in the last battle

till the end, in reality, I was also at my limit.

In the first place, I'm not even a dragon. Why am I supposed to fight so many of them together?

Since I'm fighting for Kurono, the only reason I didn't yield even with the gap in our overwhelming war potential is all thanks to the power of Love.

Seriously, what will I do if my precious body got injured?

“—nn?”

As they came closer and closer, and when they were about to enter the range of my telepathy, I felt an uncomfortable feeling.

Yeah, this feeling, no doubt, this is,

“Mind Protect? So they took a protective measure, how impudent.”

I can't see inside their hearts, a thin wall, no, a mist like barrier is preventing me from seeing their thoughts clearly.

Mind Protect was only a low level mind protection magic but it seems I won't be able to read through the whole squad like last time.

I can break through just their Protect but, doing so while under heavy fire and while attacking and dodging at the same time, it is difficult to spare even a shred of my concentration.

“Well alright, as long as I can just see through any special tricks, I'll just fight them head-on like last time.”

I'll soon be inside their attack range; I put up my Oracle Field.

If I don't have any scope of using a surprise attack, I'll just attack them from the front.

“Now, I'll kill all of you and get praised by Kurono, so quickly die for me!!”

We both attacked at the same time.

Lightning, wind, flames, ice—a diverse range of elemental attacks were fired towards me.

I also fired beams and balls of light. Its size was the same as Light Sagita but its power is at intermediate level.

The high level tracking ability of the light balls interrupted the attacks that blocked my path of flight as I closed on into them.

The light beams that can only move straight forward, aimed for the Pegasus Knights at high speed.

Even though fast, the enemy is also an elite squad and can evade these beams by predicting its path.

As my attacks approached the knights, they quickly disp—did not evade.

“Eh, they turned back!?”

I thought they would scatter and move to surround me but my prediction was overturned.

I wonder what they were thinking as they turned 180 degrees even with an enemy like me in front of them and started returning back.

“Wait, wait a minute!!”

As I tried to find out their intentions, they were barely inside the range of my telepathy so I couldn’t interfere strongly enough to break through their mind protect.

For the time being I should get closer to them to attack as well as to read their minds, so I started to chase after the running Pegasus knights.

But, in a straight line, they were slightly faster and they were slowly getting further apart. I rased my flying speed to pursue them but, no, I can’t catch up.

“Tch, anymore and I’ll be chasing them too far.”

I lowered my speed and stopped in mid-air.

It’d be too dangerous to go too far away from Alsace.

In the first place, luring an enemy like me then trapping them was a very basic tactic.

If that was what the enemy is aiming for, then I have no reason to go along with it.

As I thought of returning back, the next moment, the Pegasus Knights once again turned back.

Once again they approached me as they fired a volley of magic attacks.

“I don’t want to move any further than this, no choice but to move backwards.”

A volley fired from barely within their range was easy to dodge as well as to intercept.

I began to retreat and move backwards while still facing them.

As I did, the Pegasus Knights maintained the same distance as they flew this way.

And every time I entered their range, they would start firing magic attacks towards me.

“Kuh, could it be—“

I stopped in mid air. The Pegasus Knights also stopped in mid air.

If I advanced, they would retreat.

And if I retreat, they would advance, while maintaining the same distance. And the attacks were nothing more than a way to try and harass me.

“—they’re trying to buy time!”

I understood their intentions.

Even without reading their minds, if they move this obviously, only a fool would not be able to understand that.

Basically, the enemy was trying to make me exhaust the ‘time limit’ of my DP.

“Really, doing such impudent things.....”

# Chapter 125 – Firefight

Today, Simon was not on the rooftop but was currently encamped on the window of one of the rooms on the fourth floor with his [Yatagarasu].

From this room, from the Rone river till the Alsace's main gate, everything could be perfectly seen and was the second best point for sniping after the roof.

In today's attack, the magicians were also crossing the river so there was no bombardment on the roof but it wouldn't be strange if some other kind of attack magic was rained upon him if he stayed at the roof.

A trained archer or magician could easily deal with 1 or 2 attacks of low level magic that came from above.

But, Simon was a weak elf in the first place and also had an inferior constitution. On top of that, he didn't possess the high magical energy skills that normal Elves have either.

On the roof, he would have been in a far too big danger.

Thus, after considering his safety as well as a position suitable for sniping, this room had been allotted to him.

But even though this was supposedly a safe place, the Crusaders had far too many magicians and they were attacking this small window, where Simon was, as well.

“Uahh, hot hot!?!“

The approaching Ignis Sagita hit close to the window and spread out flames.

Unluckily, his hand got hit by some of the flames and he felt a burning pain.

“Uu.....Kuh.....”

He left the gun and hid himself inside the room for the time being.

The guild that had been blackened by Kurono, even though it was made of wood, was not shaking at all even under the constant attack of the magicians.

Simon had no worry of a magic piercing through the walls and hitting him and looked for an item to heal his hand inside the pouch that had been enchanted with Dimension magic.

A pouch like that, that could hold more than its looks, was something usually held by rank 3 or above adventurers.

The only reason Simon, a rank 1, had this is because he had been given this as a farewell gift to him a long time ago. From that, Simon brought out a small sack.

“What do I do? This is my last [Fairy’s Miracle drug]....”

As he sprinkled the sparkling powder on his burnt hand, the pain instantly disappeared and his skin returned back to its original soft and clean skin, as if time itself had been turned backwards.

The [Fairy’s Miracle Drug] that possessed incredible regenerative ability was an extremely important magic item for Simon who was not a sturdy adventurer.

But if he got injured again, he doesn’t even have any normal potions remaining now.

There was difference between a normal potion and the fairy’s miracle drug that was like the heavens and the earth.

Just how much affect will the pain remaining on his arm have on his accuracy; the fact made Simon anxious.

“.....But, I have no choice but to do this. Everyone else is still fighting as well.”

Seeing the numerous enemies spread below him, he suppressed all of his negative emotions like anxiousness and fear, and once again picked up his gun.

“That’s why, I’ll work hard as well—and shoot the enemies down!”

As he took a stance with the [Yatagarasu], in front of him one of the magicians exhausted his shield with good timing for Simon.

He pulled the trigger without hesitation and took another life of the enemy.

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“Kuh, What’s going on? Why isn’t that black box falling down already!?!?”

Seeing another subordinate of his fall down as blood flowed from his chest, the squad commander of the 5th magician squad shouted.

Disembarking from the raft, the magician squad that had spread out in the shallow areas of the river were firing vigorously on the black box of the Alsace village but let alone getting burned down, the building wasn’t even taking a scratch.

“Commander, for the time being let’s focus on defence and wait for the arrival of the 6th and 7th squads!”

“Guess there’s no other choice. Change to dual shield defences—“

The guild protected by black walls was firing on them from above but they, the magicians, had no cover since they stood at the river. So, they had no choice but to completely depend on their defensive magics.

And even that defensive magic wasn’t omnipotent.

It required quite a lot of magical energy to be activated and it was pretty difficult to cover the whole squad especially in such a condition where they were spread out.

In the first place, if defensive magic had been that perfect, there

would have been no use for castles and walls after all.

Against opponents that were hiding inside a structure like the black box that possessed a solid defence, even if they had more numbers, it was not an easy job to attack it from the front and make it fall.

“Seriously, those blockheaded heavy knights. Just how much time do they need to take to care of those demons and break through the front gate!?”

As per the plan as well, the magicians were not meant to take down the guild by themselves. They were only meant to support the infantry and the heavy knights as they broke through the front.

Thus they were firing towards the enemy archers and magicians in the guild to prevent them from attacking the soldiers.

Although, with just their attack magic they had actually thought they could destroy the guild which is why the commander was getting irritated when he failed to do so.

And on top of that, their allies' attack wasn't going too well either. They were getting delayed from their actual plan.

Although they didn't doubt their victory, they couldn't stay calm within either.

“In a little more time, soon the soldiers and the heavy knights will break through that flimsy protective wall. As expected we shouldn't be too unreasonable and just support them as planned for now.”

“umu, it is as you say. To lose your life in such a skirmish would be  
\_\_\_\_\_”

At that moment, a black bullet attacked the commander's head.

“Co, commander!?!?”

Piercing through the forehead, it made a big hole from behind the head from which blood and gore spewed out. It didn't leave any scope to even try to heal him.

“Kuh, aim for that window! Don’t let the bastard hiding there shoot anymore!!”

Seeing the threat of the enemy sniper, that could accurately aim through the slight gap inside the shield, and locating his position, the vice commander gave orders now that the commander had died.

“Our damages are too great. Hurry up and break through that protective wall.....”

# Chapter 126 – In Front of the Protective Wall

In front of the Alsace protective wall covered with barbed wires, the machinegun was raising a loud firing sound as it mowed down the soldiers trying to push through.

This overwhelming scene was the same as the first day, is what they wanted to say but,

“Ah, this is bad, it won’t hold on much longer like this!”(Mozrun)

The situation was slowly, but definitely turning to the worse.

“Stop complaining Mossan! Ah look, the enemies are coming from there!!”

Quickly turning the barrel of the machinegun, he showered bullets towards the Crusaders who were jumping over the corpses of their comrades and continued advancing.

Kurono had led the assault team to defeat the heavy knights so obviously he was not here to use crossfire.

With just one machinegun, as expected, gaps would be created due to which the soldiers were able to approach much closer.

“This is too difficult! Today the enemies have come with lots of magicians, the soldiers with shield magics are too damn hard!!”(Mossan)

While creating dark muzzle flashes, the black bullets were being fired like a storm but it was still taking a lot of time to pulverize the soldiers who now had the support of the magicians.

And in that time, the enemies would approach even closer.

“Uoh!? That was close——“

An [Ignis Sagita] flew towards Mozrun from the magician squad

that was supporting the infantry soldiers.

The fire arrow was on course to a direct hit but,

“درع لمنع الرياح [Air Shield]”

Hanna of the [Three Hunting Princesses] instantly deployed a defensive shield and blocked the arrow of flames.

“Thanks for the help little girl!”(mossan)

“Don’t call me a little girl!”(hanna)

“Gahahahaha. From my perspective every woman is a little girl!”

While cracking jokes, Mozrun continued using the machinegun.

The soldiers advance had yet to lose its vigour.

(“But, seriously it’ll be bad if it goes on like this.....”)(Mossan)

As Mozrun gave a fleeting glance to another direction, he saw numerous magicians and soldiers with bows in every direction.

Sometimes, a log like arrow would be fired from the ballista that would destroy a part of the enemy force but in front of such an overwhelming amount of troops, the number that was killed was not even worth mentioning.

It was clear that they lacked the firepower to repel the enemies.

Since the enemy magicians were continuously firing towards the sturdy guild, they (adventurers) could not hope for support and covering fire from the guild either.

Although, thanks to that, most of the enemy magicians were not attacking in front of the protective wall either.

Even the heavy knight squad was kept in check thanks to the high levelled adventurers led by Kurono.

But still, it still doesn’t change the fact that most of the enemies were attacking this protective wall.

Just like the first attack, the infantry soldiers kept on attacking, and to top it off, since the magicians had also crossed the river, they were helping the soldiers with shield and boost magic as well.

Even now when the machinegun kept on firing, they were still letting the enemy come close which was not a very good situation. And probably, Mozrun wasn't the only one who thought that.

Everyone in front of the protective wall was thinking the same thing. When the machinegun becomes unable to continue attacking, they would not even last 10mins.

(“If boss could take down the heavy knight squad and return, we could still make it through. But, he was not able to do so, we'll have no choice but to retreat.....”)

He still had quite a lot of replacement gun barrels but it won't be long before he runs out of them as well.

But still, right now, Mozrun suppressed his anxiety and kept on firing the machinegun and creating death for the enemies.

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The commander of the magician squad supporting the infantry soldiers' attack calmly looked at the ongoing battle.

“Our casualties are great but we'll break through soon enough.”

“So it seems.”

While looking at the 5th magician squad, that was continuing the attack on the black box, with eyes of pity, he rejoiced at his good luck on getting a job that had him in a safe place while supporting the advance of the soldiers.

“The heavy knight squad seems to be having more trouble than expected but—“

The 3rd heavy knight squad that had crossed the river first was already trapped in a battle royale with the demon's squad.

Since they were all fighting scattered and jumbled, the magicians might accidentally hit their own soldiers like that so the magicians had no choice but to leave those demons completely to the heavy knights.

“—After the 4th heavy knight squad also crosses the river, the outcome will be decided.”

“Before that, there's a chance that that devil's attack might stop as well.”

“Aa, right, there was that report as well.”

In front of him was the scene where the evil skeleton was instantly killing the soldiers with a threatening attack while releasing black flashes.

But it had already been proved in the last battle that there was a certain interval created after some time.

When this rapid fire black magic, that was able to hold back even such an overwhelming amount of soldier, stopped, even a uneducated soldier could tell what would happen after that.

“fufu, it's only a matter of time before this devil's village also falls.”

# Chapter 127 – Assault Team Vs Heavy Knight Squad (3)

A few meters in front of the Alsace's main gate, on the shores of the river, currently the fiercest battle was taking place.

“Goooaaah!!!”

An Orc warrior easily swung around a heavy Great Sword as he slashed around.

“Kuh, Guard!!”

The facing heavy knight blocked the attack with his shield and pushed out to repel the attack.

Although it was Orc who possess superhuman strength, if a trained heavy knight pushed along with a martial art, even an Orc would end up stumbling.

“Charge!!”

Seeing the stumbling arc, he released the martial skill that increased the thrusting power of the halberd, [Charge] and pursued him.

But the enemy wasn't weak either. Even while in a collapsing posture, he swung his great sword with one hand and endured the charging spearhead.

The Orc who blocked the attack took back a few steps and once again increased the distance between the two.

“haa.....haa.....damned demons, to think they would be this strong....”

The commander of the 3rd heavy knight squad involuntarily muttered so.

When he saw around just 20 demons jump out from the main gate, he thought of it as a great chance.

They were the best warriors among the demons that were protecting the village of Alsace. If he could take them down the rest of the attack would be easy, above all he had the confidence to do that as well.

But still, after they actually crossed swords with them, this was the result.

Due to the overwhelming strength of the demons, their line formation was soon disrupted and it turned into a chaotic melee battle.

Even though the heavy knights had the superiority in numbers, the heavy knights with the so-called invulnerable defence were falling one by one.

Due to the unexpected strength of the demons, his commands and orders were also not taking much effect. And the demons only gained more and more vigour as they kept on attacking while raising bone chilling roars.

Even those demons had fallen victim to their halberds as well, and their numbers had fallen to 2/3rds of what they were.

And even among those less than 20 demons remaining there was barely anyone that was still unhurt and were drenched in their own blood as well the blood of their opponents and had become completely clad in crimson.

But even then, without losing their fighting spirit the fact that those demons kept on fighting without any fear was a scene that made even these veteran heavy knights feel fear.

It could be, that they might be pushed back in the end as well.

“Impossible, there’s no way we would lose—[Break].”

Warding off the attack of the Orc brilliantly once again, he sliced with the axe part of the halberd as a counter.

The martial art [Break] that had the effect of increasing the slashing power this time caught the body of the Orc and tore through the

leather armour and steel like skin together and delivered a fatal blow.

“Goah, gufuuu.....”

Fresh blood spewed out from the wound and finally the Orc's giant body fell down as foam and blood appeared in his mouth.

This was the second demon he had killed.

Even though he was the commander, he had still been able to kill only 2 of them.

In his sights, he saw a werewolf of more than 2m in height crushing and smashing one of his subordinates along with the armour with his giant sword.

“Shit, if it goes on like this——“

“Don't look away during battle, you scrap iron piece of junk knight.”

As a voice came with incredible bloodlust, the only reason he was able to react this fast was thanks to his high level of skill.

“Iron Guard!!”

“Kuronagi!!”

The black blade flashed. Unable to block the power of the blade infused with the martial art skill, he ended up stepping backwards involuntarily.

But his posture didn't crumble, if he showed an opening here, he would definitely die in the next attack. That's the kind of opponent the 'Devil' attacking him was. He had finally understood that fact.

“Haaaaaa!!”

As a reflex he swung his halberd——he met with a resistance.

He was able to somehow deflect the 2 long swords that came flying

towards him.

As he took a stance with his shield to prepare for the next attack, the opponent also stepped back a little.

“A ‘Devil’ eh.....this man is too dangerous. I need to bring him down right now.”

He focused on the black clothed man standing in front of me who was called the ‘Devil’.

Defeating the Kievan’s squad at Irz village, defending Alsace in the previous battle with black magic, and the man who had created numerous corpses at the river shore right now was truly a man befitting of the title of the ‘Devil’ for the Crusaders.

He once again realized that now that he was directly facing him.

The man with black hair and black eyes and an extremely fearsome look; his black robe was now completely drenched in red blood of his enemies and his own blood as well.

But his fighting spirit was the same as the other demons, no, he had the most fighting spirit right now and as if he was also using the same to lead the demons as well.

He realized that the dark night-like pair of eyes that were glaring were clearly filled with hatred.

“.....En garde!”

Suppressing his fear with the his will of steel, he rushed forward to kill that man.

Each and every attack of this Devil were fearsome but he could definitely block them with his shield, he judged that after exchanging blows with him till now.

Even that ominous looking hatchet’s martial art was unable to cut apart his tower shield and had stopped at just scratching the surface.

(“I’ll close in to him and first block his attack with my [Guard] and after he loses balance, I’ll finish it with either [Charge] or [Break].”)

While abiding by the basics of the fighting styles used by the heavy knights, he began his attack.

He clearly had enough defensive ability to stop the enemy’s attack, and furthermore he also possessed attacking power to kill him in a single blow as well which is why he didn’t need to use any tricks.

It was a basic tactic but it had no openings and was a perfectly completed tactic.

“Uooooh!!”

“Magic Bullet arts.”

The ‘Devil’ fired the black bullets, that had become a fear for the soldiers, towards the his shield.

“Something like this won’t stop me!!”

A quite strong recoil ran through his arm but it was not enough to stop his attack.

Without getting deterred at all, he kept on rushing forward.

“—Kuronagi.”

“[Guard]!”

Both used the same skills again but this time it was the other martial art user who stumbled.

As if he had run into a giant stone, his Kuronagi was unable to cut through the Tower Shield and,

“guh—“

The Devil lost his balance.

A clear opening was created, and the knight was not naïve enough

to let it pass, otherwise he would have never become the commander of a squad.

“You’re mine!!”

He swung the Halberd, and released the martial art that could cut away even rocks, [Break].

“—I told you didn’t I, to not look away?”

As the Devil laughed while saying that, he simply needed to swing his halberd over him and end it.

But, his hand didn’t move, no, he felt his whole body losing strength.

“Walking in darkness, dancing in the night, the one swing sword—  
[Shadow Walker Hanzoma]”

Someone’s voice came to his ears.

Someone was sitting on his shoulder, and that someone was stabbing a blade inside his neck.

He didn’t know what had happened but the ‘Devil’ in front of him could clearly see it.

A single woman had approached while using her Divine Protection’s ability to its utmost to hide her presence. That woman had climbed on the knight’s shoulder and had deeply thrust in a Dagger Knife from the gaps in his armour into his neck.

“kuaha—“

But in the knight’s eyes, he could only see a fatal amount of blood spewing from his neck and the Devil in front of him laughing.

He was unable to see the figure of the person who had killed him till the very end.

# Chapter 128 – The 4 Battlefields

“Thanks for the help, Su-san.”

“Don’t mention it. If you hadn’t pulled all of his attention towards yourself, I wouldn’t have been able to aim for him either.”

After saying just that, Su-san disappeared as if melting into the background of the battlefield.

Amazing, I looked away just a little and I couldn’t see her anymore.

“But this is bad, if it goes on like this we’ll be more or less annihilated like this.”

We had brought down the heavy knight who was probably the commander but there won’t be much effect on the battle just due to loss of commands.

If we fight so jumbled like this, they wouldn’t be able to retreat either.

“ouch, ouch, just how long has it been since I got so hurt.....”

For the being, I should focus on healing myself rather than the progress of the battle.

I came here recklessly fighting with heavy knights at close range even though I’m not even a warrior but I also got enough injuries, proportionate to that as well.

A light attack from a blade could be blocked by my [Baphomet’s Embrace] but, as expected, if I get hit by a martial art, it can only reduce some of the damage at most.

Whenever I get injured I used my only healing magic(?) [Flesh compensation] to stop the wounds with the jelly like black magical energy and limited the blood loss to the minimum and continued fighting.

But, it can't be helped that it became like this. I knew this'll happen after all. I also had a way to fight them, that's why I had rushed in like this.

I am talking about Lily's speciality, [Fairy's miracle drug].

When I thought and realized that I could treat most of my wounds instantly with this, I decided to rush in the battle as well.

“Now that I think about it, this is the first time I’m using it. I wonder how good it is—“

I brought out a small sack. Unlike the potions, this was in powdered form.

Quickly, I removed the seal and opened the sack. Inside, a sparkling powder that looked like sugar was kept. The light being released was very similar to the white light that usually wraps around Lily’s naked body.

But I don’t have the time to slowly observe it. Quickly putting the powder on my palm, I applied it directly to my wounds.

“Uohh, this is amazing! The pain is completely disappearing!”

Its effect was as I had said. The moment it touched my body, the pain completely disappeared.

The Flesh Compensation made by black magical energy also completed its healing effect and the wounds completely regenerated.

On top of it, I even felt my fatigue disappearing as well.

“This is certainly an all-cure medicine. Thanks Lily.”

(“—You’re welcome, I’m happy that you liked it.”)

Suddenly a voice resounded inside my head. There's no way I would have hallucinated it. This voice certainly belonged to Lily who was currently fighting with the Pegasus Knights in mid air.

“To have communicated with me directly, did something happen?”

The communication was supposed to be stopped during the battle, I suddenly had a bad premonition but,

(“The situation’s turning a little bad.”)

It seems I was correct.

“What happened?”

(“It seems that the Pegasus Knights have become aware of my Divine Protection’s time limit and are wasting time by not attacking. Right now, I have no other option to just keep on glaring against each other till my Divine Protection runs out.”)

“.....I see.”

Depending on how you think, although stopping the enemy while the DP lasts was also a merit but the fact that she was not able to exhaust her opponents at all was really a bad situation.

“How long will your DP last?”

(“The [Queen Beryl] won’t last even 10 mins. I also only have 2 more scrolls remaining. If I were to activate my DP using that, I’ll have around 40mins.”)

“Basically, you’re saying that a completely unhurt Pegasus Knight squad will attack within an hour?”

(“Un.”)

“I got it. It can’t be helped. Just hold them out till that time lasts.”

(“Got it, but, are you fine over there?”)

“Although it’s a bit unreasonable and impossible, if we don’t do anything, Alsace village won’t last.”

(“I see.....then Kurono, don’t be too reckless.”)

“I can’t really promise that but, yeah, I’ll try not to.”

And so the communication with Lily also ended.

“This really is turning worse by the second.....”

The current Alsace defensive battle is divided in four major battles.

The first is between us, assault team and the heavy knight squad.

The second is the glaring battle between Lily and the Pegasus Knights in the air.

The third is the firefight between the magicians and Simon and the others at the guild.

And the fourth is in front of the protective wall, between Mossan and his machinegun against the attacking soldiers.

These 4 battles are, even though there's an overwhelming difference in our numbers, somehow still miraculously holding out.

All this is thanks to Lily in mid air, the blackened guild that remains unaffected even when getting hit by lower and intermediate attack magic, the machinegun that is one-sidedly killing the enemies, and last but not the least, the dire efforts made by every adventurer to keep on fighting.

But all that is only temporary. If we give even a single opening, they will quickly cut through. And this could happen in any of the ongoing battles.

No, going by the flow, Alsace will definitely fall today.

“And only we can do something to reverse that.”

If we could at least completely crush our opponents, the heavy knights, our chances of prevailing would rise.

We could strike the magicians squad, or go back to the protective wall to strengthen our defences. Especially if I could go back to resume our crossfiring, we could be able to instantly turn back the attacking soldiers.

To get through today, we need to defeat the heavy knights no matter what.

If we can't, we'll have no other choice but to be drowned by the overwhelming amounts of enemy forces and lose.

“I think we have killed quite a lot of heavy knights but——“

As I looked towards the river, I saw another squad of the same armoured knights embarking on the raft and crossing to this side.

“One more squad left.....”

I exhaled involuntarily.

We had drove these heavy knights to annihilation after a lot of sacrifices.

But nevertheless, the enemy, as if it was only obvious, is sending out another squad.

Our numbers have already lessened, and including me almost every member of the assault team is injured.

Finally the heaviness of the word ‘annihilation’ was starting to bear down on me.

“But, no choice but to do it——Hm?”

The moment I was about to once again charge towards the heavy knights, the telepathy crystal inside my bag started shining to tell me that a message was being transmitted towards me.

To get a message here meant that probably something unexpected has happened.

After Lily, I became anxious thinking about the arrival of another emergency but I quickly responded to the transmission.

“What happened?”

“Kurono-san, it’s big trouble——“

The contents told to me through the transmission was,

“What.....did you say.....”

Was a despairing thing that thrusted defeat in front of me.

# Chapter 129 – Miscalculation

The job of guarding the boundary of Alsace village was usually handled by thief class or any other quick witted and agile classes.

However, to keep an eye on the surroundings in a large area, the duty was given to summoners.

It was not really a major class among adventurers. Among the 100 adventurers in their alliance, only 3 were summoners.

In the first place, a summoner was a derivative class of magicians that focused on training monsters through spells and using them as familiar servants.

By using rank 1 monsters like dagger raptors and windwolves, they could cover a large area in their surveillance.

And that was applicable even when the battle was going on.

In the first place, due to the terrain around the village, it was almost impossible for the enemy to surround them or lead a surprise attack. So this familiar was only sent out as just a bare minimum precaution.

It could be said that it was actually meant more to make sure that monsters don't attack the village rather than the enemy coming from the rear, which had been deemed impossible.

But, the reason why they could immediately realize that the 'impossible' situation had become a reality was thanks to this familiar.

On the other side of the main gate protected by Kurono and the others, a windwolf of a certain summoner was running on the bridge made on the Reen river.

The windwolf looked like a wolf with light green fur and could use a wind Extra magic even though it was weak.

To complete the mission given by its master, the windwolves ran at

full strength.

Their mission was the surveillance of the area and to inform in case they found an enemy.

And currently they were in process of doing the latter part of their mission. That was the proof that the 'enemy' had appeared on the opposite rear gate of the village.

2 kms away from the rear gate, on the highway, the windwolf had sighted the enemy.

"Wh, what the hell.....to think that such a big squad could have circled us and come from behind....."

The summoner read through what the windwolf saw telepathically and confirmed the fact.

"I must quickly inform Kurono-san—“

And that information was quickly delivered towards Kurono through the telepathic crystal.

“—Enemy squad sighted behind the village! It's an heavy armour knight squad of around a 100men!!”

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“—Enemy squad sighted behind the village! It's an heavy armour knight squad of around a 100men!!”

“What.....did you say.....”

The moment I heard that, the words of defeat were thrusted in front of me.

Due to the terrain it was extremely difficult for the enemy to go around and surround us. I had chosen Alsace as the defensive line

for that very reason in the first place.

But that advantage had been easily overturned.

Shit, just when I was thinking that we might be able to protect the village today as well. I wished that this report was false.

I wanted to think that, but the option of continuing the battle while ignoring this report could not even exist in my head as I calmed slightly down.

“Kuh, this place won’t last now……we’ll retreat……”

I didn’t have the time to hesitate anymore. Now that our rears had been taken by the enemy, our loss had been confirmed here.

“……are you sure?”

A hesitating voice came from the other side of the crystal.

“Yeah, We’ll abandon Alsace. Give the signal for retreat. We need to get out of here as fast as possible.”

“Roger.”

As the transmission ended, the crystal broke as it had finished its job.

“Shit!!”

Why?! How did a low mobility squad like a 100 man heavy knight squad come to Alsace from behind?

There was a detour but if they used that it would have taken at least one week. I don’t think that’s possible here.

Even if they had forcibly gone through the thick dense forests, there’s no way we would have not realized a 100 man squad passing through.

We were definitely that vigilant, but, not a single movement had been seen by our observations.

I had no idea what kind of magic had they used to get so suddenly behind us.

No, maybe they might have a convenient magic that allowed them to transfer a whole squad to other places instantly.

Then what should I have done? Should I have also created a protective wall on the other side as well?

We barely had 1 week before the enemy came at us from the front main gate. We didn't have surplus time to create another protective wall on the rear which had low chance of getting under attack. It was more than enough that we were able to deploy guards there.

Thanks to that we had been able to at least sense the enemy before they came rushing in from the rear gate. I guess our luck hasn't run out completely. I need to think that way or I won't be able to keep on going on like this.

“Alright, calm down, just think about running away now.....”

Don't think about anything else, I can regret as much as I want later. If I, the leader, was late in giving my directions, I would end up sacrificing that many of my allies.

Calming down my heart, as I threw on a switch in my head, the signal of retreat, the sound of the horn, resounded throughout the battlefield.

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As the sound of the horn resounded, a black and white smoke spread out all over the front main gate.

“The demons are retreating! Don't let this chance escape, we'll press in!!”

On the other side of the river, Norz shouted in a loud voice to give

his orders.

The smokescreen enveloping the battlefield was a trick to assist their retreat was a fact that was truly obvious.

“fuu, finally the balance has been broken.”

“So it seems. I thought that it might last a bit longer.”

Sylvia standing beside him also agreed to his statement.

Certainly, the assault team made up of the elite demons had decreased quite a lot of their numbers and were still attacking the heavy knight squad with full vigour.

Even Norz had understood that, but seeing them suddenly retreat, he didn't find it very doubtful either.

“With this, we'll finally capture this annoying village as well.”

Norz who had now become certain of his victory loudly laughed as the Crusaders attacked while crossing the smokescreen.

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A dazzling flash attacked the eyes of the Pegasus Knights in the air.

“.....Tch, she ran away.”

Seeing Lily who had run away using this chance, Estel cursed.

“It seems she's heading directly towards the Black Box.”

“It still isn't the time for her 'limit' to end though—I see, it seems the battle has been settled on the ground.”

Seeing the smoke rise near the main gate and the Rone river, they understood that the demons had started to retreat.

“Will they run away like this, or will they coop up inside the Black box and fight it out? What do you think, Flan?”

“I doubt they would run away directly but, in any case, what we have to do remains the same.”

“Hah, that’s true. Then, let’s start the pursuit!!”

With Estel at the head, the Pegasus Knights began to move towards the Black guild of the village to attack it.

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(Kurono POV again)

With Vulcan as the lead, the assault team had kicked away the soldiers near the protective line and retreated till there.

As their rear guard, I was firing magic bullet arts beyond the smokescreen to hold off the enemies.

“When you use all the smoke balls it really produces way too much of the smoke.”

When the assault team had retreated in the previous battle, my black smoke was more than enough but this time we need to get everyone till the guild to escape.

Since the black smoke wouldn’t be enough to cover the whole surroundings, we had to use lots of a famous item meant to use for fleeing called [Smoke ball].

The two smokes, black and white, were acting as a blinder in front of me.

“.....the preparations for the wall are, not done yet eh?”

While pulverising the soldiers that were running through the smoke

with spears with my bullets, I steadily moved closer to the gate.

Since Fiona was still in bed, the other magicians were deployed to make a ‘wall’ to stop the enemies this time.

As I was thinking that the preparations should be completed; magical energy ran underneath my feet and indicated that a magic was about to be activated.

“Get back! Don’t get swallowed up inside the wall!!”

As I took a big leap backwards from that place, the magicians activated their wide range defensive magics.

It appeared as a bulwark made of fire, ice, and earth and stopped the advancing enemies in their tracks.

In front of me was the jet black [Death Wall Defan] that I hadn’t seen since the time we fought against those scout troops.

I should also learn to make at least a shield of this level. As the various types of walls stopped the enemies, I rolled in through the opened main gate.

“Good job coming back Boss!”(mossan)

“I made it somehow.”(kurono)

Mossan came towards me while holding a wand that had ominous looking design in the shape of a skull.

“Alright, we were the last ones.”(kurono)

“yes, everyone else has already rushed inside the guild.”(mossan)

As expected of adventurers. Such fast legs. It seems they’re good at retreating quickly as well.

“We should also hurry up. The shield is already starting to break.”(Kurono)

“That’s right.”(mossan)

While giving a last glance as a halberd pierced through the [Death Wall Defan], I jumped inside the entrance of the guild.

# Chapter 130 – The Fall of the Black Box

Inside the guild's lobby, every remaining adventurer had assembled and were beginning to evacuate through the escape route.

Seeing everyone's injured and worn out bodies, I once again realized that a fierce battle was taking place everywhere.

And above all, our numbers had decreased.

We were 103 adventurers in total but especially today, we lost 20 men leading to a major decrease in our forces.

But we're still inside battle. I don't have the time to grieve for them. We need to quickly evacuate from Alsace village.

“Vulcan, lead the assault team and make preparations at the rear gate first.”

“Is that fine? You becoming the rear guard?”

“Don't worry. That was the plan from the start after all.”

“Right, there was that as well. Then we'll leave first.”

Everyone had already been told that an enemy heavy knight squad was approaching us from the rear.

And to escape through the highway, we'll have no other choice but to break through this 100 man squad.

That will be our last obstacle.

“Ah, Onii-san.”

“Simon—woah, it seems you had it tough as well.”

Simon who was shouldering the [Yatagarasu] was completely covered in soot.

Looking closely, Simon's slender white arms had places that had red painful looking burns as well. She must have been targeted by fire attack magic.(T/N: kurono still doesn't know that Simon is a guy.)

"There were a lot of magicians after all. Everytime I shot, 10 fireballs were returned back towards me. It really was a pain to deal with."

She gave a wry smile while saying that. It seems she's still energetic.

"But I'm glad you were fine. C'mon, Simon should also hurry up and leave."

"Un, then I'll be going first—!?!"

As she said that, Simon's head jerked suddenly.

It was a reaction as if a hammer had been hit but what had hit her head wasn't a mass of steel but a mass of boobs.

"How can this be? Simon you're injured, come, show them to me."(susu)

"Ah, Susu-san....."

Maybe her DP was still active, Su-san who appeared out of nowhere hugged Simon from behind.

Simon tried to get away while being embarrassed but couldn't get away from Su-san serious locking arm.

At the same time, everytime Simon turned his head, the massive breasts on top her head swayed and bounced as if it was a slime —wait, it really is made of slime right?

"Don't play around and go, you two."(kurono)

"Oh my bad, then let's go Simon."(susu)

"Uua.....see you Onii-san."

Simon looked like he wanted to say something but, in the end, was carried away by Su-san.

As I sent off those two women who got along well, most of the other adventurers had also departed it seems and the usually busy lobby not felt very lonely.

As I was feeling sentimental like that, the last member also returned.

“I’m back Kurono.”(lily)

Since Lily was holding back the Pegasus Knights till all of the rest evacuated, she was the last one to return back to the guild.

“It’s good that you are still safe.”(kurono)

“We were only glaring each other after all.”

She had already returned to her child form but her mind was still in the normal state.

“I also confirmed from the air, a white armoured group was heading towards us.”(lily)

“I see. If it was just infantry soldiers, it would have been much easier though.”

“But, is it fine? We have only stopped them for 5 days. There’s a chance that they might catch up with the refugees you know?”

“Yeah, but we could make use of guerrilla warfare in the Gallahad mountain ranges to stop them for a 1 more day.”

“Really?”

“.....probably. We won’t know unless we try.”

Lily’s mean spirited smile was painful for my heart. Please don’t show such an evil smile while in the child form.

“fufu, it’ll be fine. We’ll make through somehow.”

“That’s true. Then Lily go first——“

“there’s no way I’m going before you. I’ll always be together with Kurono and I have no intention to be away from you.”

Since there was need for Lily to be in the rear guard with me, I wanted her to leave first but she clung on to my hood of the robe as usual. I can’t even shake her off like this.

“Can’t be helped.”

As I patted her head who was sitting around my neck like a cat, she really calmed me down amazingly even though we were inside a battlefield of carnage.

“You seem to be pretty carefree even under such situations, Kurono-san.”

“Fiona!? Uu, Um, is it fine to walk already?”

The black clothed witch Fiona also appeared with her usual sleepy expression but, was it just me that felt that her expression was also giving off an extremely cold feeling?

“Complete recovery, is what I’d like to say but at least I can walk normally for now. I received a lot of potions after all.”(Fiona)

I could imagine Fiona gulping down all sorts of potions on her bed in my mind.

“Then I’ll go first and prepare the horses.”(Fiona)

“I’ll leave it to you.” (kurono)

After seeing Fiona off as she disappeared into the underground escape passage, the sound and the shock waves shaking the guild became bigger.

“Soon, this place will also become dangerous——“

Especially the entrance; they must have brought a battering ram as it’s making a loud banging sound.

No matter how much I have enhanced it, it's only a matter of time before they break through if it continues like that.

“Now then, time for me to use my last trick as well.”

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(POV change)

The crusaders had, after crossing through the barbed wires and crushing through the wooden fence, finally broken through the Alsace protective wall.

Now that demons had stopped resisting and cooped up inside the guild, they were able to easily cross over the fence where they were struggling till now.

And finally, the end of this battle of was now in sight.

The crusaders rushed and flocked around the guild building known as the black box as if they were ants rushing towards sugar.

Around the guild, the visibility was still bad due to the smokescreens but since not even a single arrow was being fired towards them, they continued moving towards it at full pace.

Only the Pegasus Knights were unable to attack since they could not see the enemies from the air and were on standby in mid air. They simply decided to observe as the ground forces toppled that ominous building.

“Alright, one more strike!!”

Vigorous shouts resounded in front of the guild.

The soldiers were using the logs used for crossing the river to break the gate as well.

It was a non-magical primitive method but the log being lifted and swung by countless soldiers clearly had the destructive force as it bent the black magic enhanced gate with every hit.

And finally, after receiving damage beyond its limits, the black gate was broken down and the formidable Black box finally allowed the entry of invaders.

“It’s open!! Charge!!!”

“UOOOOHH!!!”

Raising a loud war cry, the troops rushed inside the guild.

The lobby was big enough to allow 100 adventurers stand together but under the waves of the rushing soldiers, it was quickly filled.

“What, the enemy isn’t here!!”

“Be careful, they might be hiding upstairs.”

“No, they must have an escape route! Search for it!!”

Since this wasn’t really out of their predictions, the troops moved quickly.

One of them climbed the stairs and checked every separate room. Another one checked for a secret escape route in the walls or the floor.

Probably, a request for searching had also been sent to the Pegasus Knights in the air.

At least, it was impossible for around 50 demons to suddenly disappear into nothingness.

They didn’t know whether they were hiding or had run away, but it was only a matter of time before they would be found.

That was what every Crusader was thinking.

\*bakii—bakiin—\*

An ominous sound resounded inside the ears of every soldier inside the guild.

“O, Oi, that was——“

A sound as if a pillar of wood had been broken, and, that was an absolutely correct thought as well.

With consecutive sounds of something vital breaking apart, the floor began to tremble.

“Quickly run!! It’s going to fall!!”

The soldiers quickly turned to run out of the guild but it was already too late.

The building loaded with countless troops instantly collapsed and also dragged the surrounding troops with it as well without allowing them any time to escape.

The loud sound of destruction resounded all over the surroundings as it drowned out the screams of the soldiers.

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(Kurono POV)

“——Blackening release.”

As I released the blackening on the guild, the wooden building instantly fell as I had already left a trick for that.

“Alright. Looks like that went well.”

“We did it!”

I did a high five with Lily on my shoulder.

The explosive sound and rumbling that reached even this escape

passage proved that my trick had worked well.

If I destroyed the guild completely like this, I could also seal the entrance to this escape passage as well.

“nn, it looks like quite a lot of them were dragged into it as well.”(lily)

“Is that so? It seems the guild worked its best till the end. I must thank it.”(kurono)

Although I was the one who had enhanced it, the guild had really beared well till this time. If one day we were able to free back Alsace from the Crusaders, I'll make sure to build a commemorative stone here for the guild.

“I've done all I could. All that's left is too run away at full speed!”

“Un!”

# Chapter 131 – Breaking Through the Enemy Lines

“You’re back Kurono!!”

After crossing the escape route, we were greeted by Vulcan ready to depart on his Bicorn.

“Yeah, I also buried those bastards alive with the guild as well.”

“hehehe, then, let’s hurry up and go.”

On the rear gate, numerous carriages for the purpose of our retreat had been prepared.

Using the horses used by the adventurers, we were pulling the hurriedly constructed carriages.

They were pretty big as well though they were not really magnificent. But it was just barely enough to transport everyone.

It’d be nice if it doesn’t break during the travel though. I could only hope that it at least holds till we reach the foot of the Gallahad mountain ranges.

“Well, before that there is also the problem whether we can break through the heavy knight squad or not.”

At the horizon of the flat road, numerous human figures could be seen.

While hoisting a flag with the emblem of the cross, that detestable heavy knight squad was the main reason behind why I decided to abandon Alsace.

“Let’s go! We’ll charge through at full speed!!”

This was the only way to break through them.

As the sound of whips striking the horses resounded, the carriage

began to move forward while swaying.

While leaving behind the prints of hooves on the ground, the line of carriages sped out of the rear gate.

First we needed to cross over the wooden bridge that was built over the Reen river on this side.

Both Rone and Reen rivers were of similar sizes so the Crusaders would have trouble to cross the river on this side as well without the bridge.

“Are the explosives ready?”

“No problems there. We can start whenever!”

I was at the lead of the line. Using Lily’s telepathy I contacted with the magician on the last carriage in the line.

“Alright. Do it!”

“Roger—[Ignis Kris Sagitta].”

Just as how we had destroyed the bridge on the Rone river 5 days back, using the magic item infused with fire attack magic, we blew up the bridge.

If there was no bridge, only the Pegasus Knights would be able to chase after us instantly. And with Lily still in good health, the Pegasus Knights won’t try and attack us very rashly.

With this, we have reduced the chances of them chasing us for now.

“All that’s left is to cut across the squad in front of us.”

The carriage which was already at top speed steadily reduced the distance between us and the enemy squad.

The carriage I’m on is the leading one. It was originally used by Vulcan’s party but right now, except for the beastman driver, the rest aren’t riding with us.

This carriage that will break through the enemy squad first is ridden by members with the max explosive power to open up a gap in the enemy squad lines.

I, Lily and Fiona of [Element Master], the three sisters of the [Three Hunting Princesses] and Mossan with the machinegun were currently riding this carriage.

On the right of the driver, I was sitting, and on his left was Fiona. On the roof of the carriage was Mossan with his machinegun along with Lily, who had already activated her DP at max power and was in her girl form. And Irina-san and the other were positioned on both the windows on the side with their magic bows.

Running parallel to this carriage were Vulcan on his Bicorn and many other high ranked adventurers who were brandishing their weapons, ready to clash with the enemy forces.

“Fiona, is it alright for you to fight? Both in terms of magical energy and the range in which you attack.”(kurono)

I asked Fiona, who was holding a red wand that I had never seen before.

“I’m fine in both senses. This [FireBall] is wand that will only release a set amount of firepower no matter how much magical energy is poured into it after all.”(Fiona)

“.....you had something convenient like that as well.”

Then, wouldn’t it been fine to have used just that when entering an adventurer party before? But Fiona soon rejected my thoughts.

“It’s something an amateur magician uses who can’t even properly use a low level magic.”

“Aah, because it will still fire the same amount of power even then, I see.”

And, once the magician becomes able to use magic stronger than this [FireBall], it would signify that the magician has graduated from this wand.

“Then isn’t the fire produced by it weak?”(kurono)

“It’ll be alright. I have customised it to rapid fire attacks. It’ll be useless against high ranked monsters but it’ll still be effective to stop the heavy knights.”

“I see. Then I’ll be counting on you.”

“If you say that much, then it was worth it to have shamefully mixed up as a first year student even though I was a third year just to but this staff.”

Ah, I feel like I read another page of her Black History.(T/N: black history = embarrassing/sad past)

“Hey, don’t have fun talking while excluding me. I’ll feel lonely!”(lily)

Lily’s complaining voice came from above.

“Sorry, that wasn’t really the intention.”(kurono)

“GaHaHa, to be jealous even at such a time, you really are cute little fairy!”(Mossan)

“Stop talking in that manner to me, will you?”(lily)

“St, stop! Please stop! That light is really bad for a skeleton like me! I’ll be purified, really—“

I couldn’t really see from here but I could see something shinging above.

“They sure do get along.”(kurono)

“Oh, is Kurono-san also envious?”(Fiona)

“nn, yeah, that might be true.”(kurono)

“—too bad Lily-san, it seems there’s no hope.”

Fiona muttered something. What the hell does she mean by hope?

“You bastards, stop playing around while the enemy is in front of you! Show some damn fighting spirit, will ya!!”

Vulcan shouted at us from the side.

“Sorry, my bad.”(kurono)

Pulling myself back together, I began pouring magical energy inside my [Black Ballista Replica] and began attack preparations.

The heavy knights were already close enough to see them clearly.

“Is everyone ready?—“

And finally, the carriage entered the attack range.

We fired our strongest magics to open up a gap inside the line of heavy knights in front of us.

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A group with silver armour, halberd and tower shield, similar to the heavy knights Kurono had fought not some time ago, were moving through the highway.

In front of them, a line of carriages was approaching towards them at full speed.

The moment when the distance between them reached 100m, an immense wave of magical energy was generated from the carriages.

But even in front of such a clear attack from the carriages, the heavy knights kept on moving forward without speaking a single word.

“Magic Bullet Arts- Gatling Burst.”

The first attack that reached the heavy Knights was two streams of black bullets.

The black bullets fired by Kurono's baton and Mozrun's machinegun directly hit this wall of steel.

With a violent metallic sound, a huge dust of cloud was raised from the bullets that dug into the ground.

After the fast bullets, a bunch of fist sized fireballs and lightnings attacked.

The fireballs were [Ignis Sagitta] fired by Fiona using [Custom FireBall].

Although not as fast as Kurono's bullets, those fireballs attacked at a speed that could overturn common sense, and exploded as soon as they came into contact with the steel armours and stopped their advance.

With a electrifying shrill sound, the members of the [Three Hunting Princesses] fired an intermediate level wide range attack magci, [Line OverBlast] with their bows.

Passing through the metal armour, the lightning attacked with an even bigger effect and range.

They had been struck pretty hard by the bullets, fireballs and lightning, but the strongest attack had yet to come.

“—[Meteor Strike].”

A light magic circle appeared over the heavy knights and a mass of rainbow coloured light fell down from it.

So that the carriage could pass through, Kurono had warned Lily to not create a crater so Lily had held back quite a lot but,

\*DOGOGOGOGOO!!\*

It still had enough firepower to blow away the heavy knights on the highway.

A seven coloured explosion and shock waves covered the area but Kurono and the others' carriages kept on moving without paying it

any mind.

Their formation had already been disrupted due to the [Meteor Strike] but the heavy knights once again began to move with their halberds to seal the highway.

But by that moment, the leading carriages had already thrust into the group of heavy knights.

“[Air Slash]!!”

Vulcan, under the DP of Wolfegand, attacked the heavy knights with his large blade enveloped in wind.

And, Kurono, who had shifted from long range magic bullets to his cursed hatchet in his hand, released his martial art towards the knights coming towards him with their halberds.

“Kuronagi—!?”

The jet black slash cleanly split the heavy knight’s halberd and armour together.

But, at that moment, Kurono realized the ‘abnormality’ in that heavy knight squad.

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“Kuronagi—“

I released my martial art skill to block against the halberd aimed towards us.

The blades clashed for a second, and the ominous edge of the [grudge hatchet- Hararetsu] cut apart the steel handle of the halberd without any resistance at all and futher moved on to split the full plate armour as well.

“—!?!“

But, it's weird.

This feeling was definitely weird.

I had felt something was strange when they didn't use any defensive martial arts nor any defensive magics even though we had started to attack them from a long range but, now I'm sure.

“These guys aren't heavy knights.....”

“”Eh??””

As I muttered so, both Lily and Fiona reacted to my words without stopping their attacks.

I once again released a martial art towards another one of these 'fake' heavy knights.

As expected, there was no resistance from their armours even though they are supposed to be heavily sturdy due to defensive enchantments. I remembered this feeling of cutting through, also, no blood spewed out from the place that I had cut either. Now I was perfectly sure.

“These are light golems!!”

Movements that are so monotone that they could never be called an 'elite' squad, also extremely weak armour.

They were the light golems, that I had once fought against during the maneuvering experiments.

“What's going on.....then are these just dolls for show—“

Could it be that they had been deployed behind us to intentionally make us retreat, meaning, it was fake/decoy troops!!

When I thought that,

“Oi, this is dangerous! Stop!!”

Vulcan's loud voice resounded.

“What, is that—barbed wires!?”

As I looked towards it, black thorn-like arrangements had been spread all over as if to seal the highway.

They were exactly the same as the barbed wires used on the main gate of Alsace to stop the soldiers.

And I remembered that barbed wires could also be used to stop not just soldiers but horses as well.

Vulcan pulled the reins of his Bicorn and somehow stopped before it stepped on the barbed wires.

But this was a carriage with 8 people on it, without any way to stop suddenly nor decelerating much, we crashed into the barbed wires.

“Shit—“

The moment I realized that this carriage would definitely overturn and resolved myself to jump down,

“Uoh, What now!?”

The hood of my robe was suddenly grabbed and my body was thrown in mid-air.

Why? The carriage hasn't toppled yet—or rather, right now, I saw the wheels of the carriage getting stuck in the barbed wires.

I hadn't realized what had happened instantly, but after I landed on the other side of the barbed wires, I finally realized what happened.

“.....Lily, is it?”

“Sorry, I could just barely save Kurono only.”

As her wings flashed as they flickered, the girl Lily looked towards me from my side with upturned eyes.

“No, thanks for the help.”

“ufufu, you’re welcome.”

Foreseeing that the carriage was about to topple sideways, Lily, who was on the roof, quickly grabbed me and rescued me.

“Everyone else is—“(kurono)

“They’re adventurers, they won’t die so easily.”(lily)

As I looked, various figures stood up from within the barbed wires and from inside the fallen carriage.

“Oi! You guys alright!?”(kurono)

“.....Lily-san you’re so cruel, you abandoned me.”(Fiona)

“Sorry, it happened all to quick so I only had time to save just one person.”

As Fiona appeared from the barbed wires, she protested against Lily as she straightened her fallen hat.

Well I also feel sorry that only I had been saved by Lily but at least I’m glad that they aren’t injured.

As a silver lining, only our carriage had toppled from the barbed wires. Rest of them that were behind us had been able to stop just in time.

“No, this isn’t the time to be relieved yet.”

But still, since we had been surrounded by quite a big number, not to mention that the highway had been sealed by the barbed wires, it doesn’t look like we’ll be able to break through very easily.

In the end, our advance had been perfectly stopped here.

If we stay slow, they might use this chance to attack with the Pegasus Knights and even soldiers might cross the Reen river as well.

“No other choice, we’ll defeat all of them right here and now!! The

enemy might look like heavyknights but were actually light golems. They aren't much stronger than your average soldier, we can defeat them easily!!”

On the other side of the barbed wires, the adventurers climbed down from the carriages and quickly drew their weapons.

As expected of adventurers, they were able to quickly deal with the changing situation without panicking.

“Ora Kurono! Don't be lazy and come over here as well!”

Vulcan brandished his large sword as he shouted towards me.

“Ou, I'll be there soon——“

“nono, you have to stay here.”

Suddenly a man's voice came from my side.

“.....who is it.”

As I looked towards the source of that voice, I saw a young man leaning on one of the trees of the forest on the side of the highway.

With ruffled long, light brown hair and loose clothes that exposed his bare body. On his trained muscled chest, a necklace with an emblem of a cross was shining.

His appearance felt like a delinquent yankee even in this world.

But, the long sword hanging on his waist and the short wand in his hand that was of a type I had never seen, clearly proved that this man was a mercenary trained in fighting.

I can't sense any killing intent but there was still an unspeakable unpleasant atmosphere.

“Oi Oi, you're not supposed to ask 'who is it?' now, right? Even though I had 'looked after you' back then, How cruel of you! Oh but, maybe you don't remember me cuz I was wearing a mask back then? Hiyahahaha!!”

He laughed in an irritating way, but I didn't really care about that. But what the fuck did he say just now?

“You can't be.....”

“hehehe, even though you had gone through all the trouble to run away to Pandora. Too bad, but I've come to take you back, No. 49!!”

# Chapter 132 – Experimental Squad (Hundred Numbers)

Surprise and anger stirred up inside my mind.

Those painful days, memories of fighting against monsters everyday due to those white masked bastards, is still vividly burned inside my mind. But still, after meeting and living with Lily, I had finally gotten back my peace of mind.

I had not considered that those masked bastards of that experimental facility were closer to me even when Irz village was burned by the crusaders and when I was fighting them for the villagers to escape safely.

But,

“Say Oi, you seem to having a lot of fun living with those women. Also fighting so desperately along these shitty demons, is this country so important for you? HUH!?”

One of those masked bastards has arrived here.

Why, how, why now——such questions didn’t come from my mouth. I only asked this.

“You’ve come to take me back? What’s that supposed to mean?”(kurono)

“How dare a damned ‘foreigner’ speak like a human with me!—is what I’d like to say but fine. You’re special so I’ll talk with you.”

With a listless expression, the man walked right in the middle of the highway.

(“Kurono, should I kill him?”)

Lily used her telepathy to talk with me.

(“No, not yet. I have a mountain load of things I want to ask him. I

know that we don't have time but.....just play along for a while.”)

“If Kurono says so then fine. But I'll say this in advance, I'm already—“)

Out of time. As she spoke,

“Ah, Lily!?”

Enveloped in a dazzling light, Lily,

“Kurono.”

Returned back to her child form.

“buhahaha! What the heck, why did it turned into a brat? What a waste.”(mask)

The man laughed defencelessly. As if to hide from his unpleasant gaze, Lily hid behind my legs.

“Uu!”

Lily clearly showed her displeased expression towards the man. She's like a cat who was trying to intimidate its opponent.

“Answer my question.”

“It's a coincidence. Total coincidence. As if I would come all the way to Pandora just for someone like you. But, now that I have come across you, I have no choice but to capture you right? Even though there had been 0 escapees till now, because of you our reputation was tainted.”

A coincidence, eh? I don't know serious he is but I guess he really is here not to capture me but for some other objective.

“hehe, don't make such a difficult face. It seems you really don't know anything about yourself or us.”

“What is your objective? Why was I, no, why were we summoned to this world?”

“But, I have no obligation to explain all that to you. If you want to know, then ask the geezers in Elysion by yourself. I think they’ll tell you how many toys like you they have made and everything as well clearly.”

The man smiled jokingly from the bottom of his heart. Shit, how much does he want to play around?

“Don’t make such a scary face, if you let yourself get captured peacefully, I’ll give you a special service and tell you everything I know—“

At that moment, something that had been hiding on the sides, jumped out on the road.

Except for the common helm, they were wearing random armours on their bodies. Probably, they are those mercenaries that had attacked us the day before yesterday.

Judging by their bodies, 2 are men, 2 are women. A total of four people.

As they quickly assembled beside that man, their movements showed no wastage. It seems they are not mediocre as they look.

“—for example, just how much these ones begged for their lives.”(man)

As the man snapped his fingers, reacting to that sound, the 4 people removed their helms.

“You worthless scum.....these guys are your new experimental bodies eh?”

They had the pretty much same age. Those black hair and black eyes that had been revealed were no doubt the same as me, people of japan.

“They are the experimental squad the Hundred numbers. Actually, not me but No.49, you were supposed to lead these brats you know?”

100 numbers you say? You mean you sacrificed 50 more people after me?

I can't forgive this, but, since I myself had only run away with all I had and had not even thought of going against that facility, I might not have the right to say anything to them either.

Although, now that they have completely lost their ego, my words wouldn't reach them anyway.

There was no light in the eyes of those 4 people. Their eyes had a dull swamp-like black colour and it was irritating just to see it. They must have been brought under complete control with those white rings.

I have experienced it that's why I know that they will never have their consciousness back ever again.

“So, what do you say? If you surrender then you'll be happily appointed as the commander of these hundred numbers as per the original plan. Of course with the [Thought controller – Angel Ring] attached though.”

While grinning, the man touched the ring on the head of the girl beside him.

So its called [Angel Ring]. Giving it such a ridiculous name, I only became more and more disgusted and annoyed.

“I refuse. I'll kill you as well as these experimental bodies right here.”

I took out my hatchet in my right hand and baton in my left.

I don't have the time to talk with him anymore, and it doesn't seem like he's going to talk anyway.

“Oioi, you're so damn cold. Aren't they of the same 'Japanese' race of yours? Don't you want to even try to save them?”

“You should know it best right? Even if I removed the ring now, their consciousness and personalities will never return.”

In the first place, I can barely protect myself. I don't have the power to protect them as well.

In such a situation I will not show any mercy to my 'enemies'.

Then, all I can do out of pity is to kill them so that they can't be used by this motherfucker.

"Tch, you really are a troublesome bastard. No choice then— Seal Unlock, blow away No.49's limbs and bring him to me."

""Roger.""

With those words, the equipment they were wearing suddenly dispersed in the air like black particles. The disappeared armour was replaced by a grey robe and everyone of them changed to look the same.

""Preparing for battle—""

As they held up their right hands, black particles converged and became a black long sword.

And on their left hands, just like the sword, a black baton was created.

And behind them 3 long swords floated in mid-air.

""—Complete.""

"The same black magic as me, huh?"

Their armaments are so similar to me, as if they had been looking at me till now.

If they can use the same abilities as me as well then this will become a 1 vs 4 trial of strength.

No, if I were to add that grinning bastard as well then there were 5 enemies.

"Kurono! Lily will fight as well!!(lily)

“Yeah, I know——“

I ended up smiling towards Lily as she asserted by pulling my robe.

That’s right, I have a reassuring partner as well. It’s different from how I was fighting alone in that facility.

Now that they have come along with experimental bodies, I won’t get a better opponent to unleash my hatred than this.

“—Let’s go.”

I’ll make you regret coming in front of me.

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“Uoraaaaaa!!”

Vulcan’s large sword slashed away the light golem along with its fake armour as if it was paper.

“Hah, there really is no resistance.”

He who had been fighting against the actual elites just a while ago, could only feel disappointed towards these powers.

“Oi, don’t go too far off Vulcan. They are still stronger than goblins and they have quite a lot of numbers as well.”

A beastman of the same party stopped Vulcan as he was about to jump further into the enemies.

“My bad, my bad, I had been fighting like that just a while ago so it was unintentional.”

As his sharp wolf eyes looked around, he realized that the members of his {Vulcan Powered} were fighting in their usual formation beside him.

Only, it felt a bit sad to be using this formation again after they had lost one of their members who had taken part in the assault team.

“But still, this really feels like a normal collaborated monster clean-up quest.”

As he looked around, just like them, the other adventurers were also fighting with their original parties, and were in formation.

Warrior centric parties had become lesser due to the high death rate of the assault team but they were compensating for that with the help of solo adventurers and teaming up with other parties.

During quest, that too in front of the enemy, to take up formations like that so smoothly, the various parties needed an extreme amount of trust and faith in the other even though there were chances of being tricked by the other party. But that trust and faith had been built up during this battle at Alsace.

Thus, none of them felt anxious as they very naturally entrusted each other's back to others and concentrated on the enemy in front of them which allowed to deal with them much quickly.

“Alright, let's quickly finish up these puppets—oh!”

Instinctively, he guarded with his large sword against the killing intent and magical energy aimed towards him.

“This one is!?!?”

As expected, the enemy's attack magic was easily blocked by the [Evil Eater] and absorbed completely by the large sword.

But, Vulcan clearly saw the black bullet fired towards him before it was absorbed by his sword.

“Isn't this Kurono's Magic Bullet Arts!?!?”

Did he actually misfire? No that was impossible.

That's because the one who had fired that was standing right in front of him.

“Hah, what the actual fuck? He can use Magic Sword Arts as well?!”

The enemy that had jumped in mid air using the shoulder of one of the light golems as a foothold possessed similar armaments as Kurono except for the grey robe he wore.

In his right hand was a black long sword and in his left was a grey baton. And behind him were floating 2 swords of the same black material.

From the air, the Kurono ‘replica’ moved towards Vulcan to slash at him and foreseeing the time their blades would clash, he controlled the 2 floating swords and fired them towards Vulcan.

“Tch, doing troublesome things—“

Vulcan full swinged his large sword like a bat hitting a ball.

The Evil Eater had a bigger reach and the blade attacked the opponent blade and repelled him away through sheer power.

After that, Vulcan magnificently dodged the 2 flying swords by using the wind enveloping him due to the DP of Wolfegand.

The 2 swords that missed it targets began to return back to its user but one of them was struck by Vulcan’s large sword as he swung it back and was smashed to little pieces.

“The bastard withdrew, eh?”

The grey robed magician had already disappeared from in front of him. He had simply jumped back even further when he was flung away and once again mixed among the puppets like an assassin.

A distance had been created for now, but Vulcan did not drop his guard and continued to survey the surroundings with his large sword still in his hands.

(“Oi Oi, there are quite a lot of these Kurono ‘replicas’ hidden among them.”)

As he looked, he saw many other adventurers come under attack

like him from the grey robed men.

He had been able to repel him with his ability but it didn't go that well for others.

They could control 3 swords at the same time. There were very few who knew how to deal with such attacks.

Even a rank 3 would end up getting slightly injured. It was that troublesome of an attack.

“Oi, everyone be careful! There are guys that can use the same techniques as Kurono mixed up within them!”

“Roger!!”

“Damn, who the hell are these troublesome bastards? Do they have some connection with Kurono?.....”

As Vulcan raised his large sword while complaining like that, he had no way of knowing that beyond the barbed wires, Kurono was currently fighting against that person that had a ‘connection’ with him.

# Chapter 133 – Element Master Vs Hundred Numbers (1)

“Magic Bullet Arts.”

Let's make the first move. Heavy knights had blacked it with their armour and shields but a magician's robe wouldn't be able to do the same.

Black bullets appeared around me and turned towards the experimental bodies.

Reacting to my actions,

“Uuuu!!”

Lily also deployed her Oracle Field and entered an attack stance.

I swung my baton to fire a storm of bullets without any gap towards the 4 experimental bodies that were protecting the man.

And above them a magic circle of light that possessed incredible destructive power also appeared.

It was impossible to dodge. In the first place, if they wanted to protect that man, they couldn't let even a single attack magic to pass through them.

””منع انتشار الظلام الجدران السوداء الداكنة الدفاع

I had expected them to take defensive measures obviously, but I didn't expect them to know how to chant as well. Are they even more skilled than me or has the experiment simply moved further.

””—Black Wall.””

The chants of the 2 men on the sides were completed and a defensive shield was deployed around them.

A black wall, similar to [Death Wall Defan], appeared in a wide

range.

But these shields were not made of dark magical energy but black magic. They look the same but the quality is different.

At least a materialized black magical energy shield would be much more effective in blocking my bullet arts.

But why is it that every other experiment except me was so good at making defensive shields? Do I just lack the talent at it?

Well leaving that aside for now, the shields that appeared were 2 in number. One in front to block my bullets and one above to block Lily's attack.

From here it looked like they had been suddenly covered by a black rectangle.

“Full Burst!!”

“Eei!!’

The moment their defensive magics activated, our attacks were shot out.

More than a thousand bullets were shot out and a pillar of light came down like lightning to envelop the black shields with a flash of black and white. A shockwave and sounds of explosion resounded.

With the sound of shattering glass, the black shields broke.

“So they nullified each other out.”

The shields had been broken through but not even a single bullet or a beam of light could reach them. No, I guess it was a good thing that our attacks were able to at least break their shields.

“”Automatic Fencing – Auto Killer.””(experiments)

Just when the black shields were destroyed, the 2 women began to attack with the swords in their hands and the ones floating behind

them.

But still, [Automatic Fencing] sounds so nostalgic. It wasn't [Magic Sword Arts] back then during the maneuvering experiments.

And it had the exact same effect as my own attack. That is, swords came attacking on their own.

Excluding the swords in their hand, there were  $3 \times 2 = 6$  total swords.

“They're aiming for Lily?—“

Rather my sturdy body, they must have decided that it would be easy to defeat Lily who had a child like body or maybe they found the pillar of light to be dangerous.

In any case, what I have to do hasn't changed.

“—Don't you dare even think of touching Lily in front of me you fuckers!! Magic Sword Arts!!”

I faced the blackened swords flying like arrows with my own 10 swords.

I sent 2 swords towards 1 of theirs. I can easily bring them down.

The swords used by the enemies are a total of 6, meaning 1 of their swords will definitely pass through.

“Oraaa!!”

Putting my vigour behind it, I used my favourite partner, the cursed hatchet, to bring the last one down.

Both were blackened blades but my Hararetsu's performance was overwhelmingly better.

The edge of the hatchet that was shining with a black aura completely pulverised the blackened blade that was flying towards Lily.

(“Lily step back a little.”)

(“Un!”)

Connecting through Telepathy, we smoothly entered our roles as vanguard and rear guard.

Even if I was a newbie adventurer, I had been constantly doing quests along with Lily for the past 3 months. We could easily use such simple coordinated movements.

I moved in between the 2 women who were aiming for Lily.

Without any change in their expression, they came rushing directly towards us.

“”Slash.””

Both of them released the martial art [Slash] at the same timing. I’m surprised that they even know martial art skills! They didn’t teach me anything like that!

But you’re not the only ones who can use martial arts.

“Kuronagi!!”

I was superior in both, the ability of my weapon and the power of my martial art. It was easy to counter attack against both of them with the same one attack. In fact I had enough power to force them back.

With a loud sound of metal clashing, 3 swords intersected as they released sparks.

As expected, the two women were outmatched by my Kuronagi and were blown back 2 steps.

They didn’t really broke their stance but that was enough to provide an opening to attack.

“Yaah!!”

With a cute sound that came from behind me, 2 balls of light rushed towards them.

The balls of light that possessed tracking ability, easily passed through me and rushed towards those two. It had the perfect timing that did not allow even time to use defensive magic.

“”Black Bullet rifle.””

But, the balls of light were blocked by the black bullets that were rapid fired from the front.

It was a protective fire made by those two men behind them.

It seems that side can perform pretty good coordinated movements.

“”Black Buckshot.””

I stepped forward to attack further but the two women quickly back stepped to create a distance between us and fired buckshot towards me to stop me.

“Kuh, Black Shield!”

I stopped right there and deployed my defence. Though buckshot has a wide range, it lacks power. It could only barely put some cracks in my shield.

But still, just how much more are they going to imitate my moves before they are satisfied? At least try to name it something else other than ‘Buckshot’! Do you even know what it means!?

“.....so we’re back to how it was.”

Leaving that aside, the 2 women who had attacked Lily had now retreated back towards the 2 men.

The swords held by those 2 had now cracks due to my Kuronagi.

It seems that the effect of losing the enchant of black magic on receiving a huge shock attack was also the same as me. In fact, theirs’ seems to be even weaker.

Were they being stingy while pouring the black magic inside the sword?

While I was thinking that, the 2 women threw away that sword and brought out new ones and blackened them for use.

I see, so they have countless replacements.

At the same time, I also realized that those black swords were not made completely of black magic but were actually brought out through Dimension magic.

To be able to bring out materials directly in their hands; it seems that their Dimension magic is one step above my own [Shadow Gate].

I seem to be superior in direct attacking strength and magical energy quantity, but in everything else they seem to have better skill. I need to stay on guard.

(“Kurono!”)

(“What happened Lily?”)

As her voice resounded inside my head, I still kept on paying attention towards those 4 as well.

(“Well, it seems they are also connected with telepathy!”)

(“.....These 4 are?”)

(“Yes! So they are able to move even when they cannot see!”)

I see. So that was the trick behind their coordinated attacks and perfect timing.

I don't know whether that's due to their black magic, or due to the ring in their hand or maybe they have communication device embedded inside their heads, but in any case this really is a troublesome ability.

Even a normally weak monster can overpower a higher ranked

adventurer by attacking in groups. To be able to communicate within thoughts is an extremely amazing advantage for group battles.

(“Can you jam it?”)(kurono)

So if they lose it, it'll also become a huge minus for them.

If they were experimented later than me, then not much time should have passed since they were ‘created’. If they lose their telepathy, they won't be able to use a high coordination team play like now.

(“uu, sorry Kurono, I can't do it now. It'll take too much time.”)

(“How long?”)

(“1 min...but if they are using a [Mind jammer], Lily won't be able to do anything.”)(T/N: constant reminder- Lily talks in third person many times when in child form.)

I should be able to tank them alone for 1 min but if Lily won't be able to attack at all, it'll become troublesome.

If their telepathy gets jammed, I alone could take care of them but if I go on full assault, who'll protect Lily?

On the other side, they are in battle with the 100 light golems. I can't expect any reinforcement to come from that side by crossing the barbed wires.

Then, the very best action we can take is to kill that masked bastard as quickly as possible—

“oo, as expected of that old geezer, you're made very well No.49. Is 4 people too easy for you?”(masked bastard)

“Then how about you fight as well? You're acting as their leader in my place right?”(kurono)

“How can you even think of me as a just a boss of these things? A human chosen by god will only treat a foreigner that is even lower

than a slave as just an item to ‘use as much as he can’! Just as how God won’t take actions for humans, why would a human like me act against foreigners like you—“

As he snapped his fingers, 4 more appeared from the forest on the sides.

Their equipment and armaments were exactly the same but the blackened swords behind them were only 2. They must be weaker than the previous ones.

But, suddenly the number of opponents doubling is not a very good. Considering that all 8 of them are connected with Telepathy, their teamwork would be a deadly threat.

“Well, I doubt an uncivilised imbecile foreigner could understand what I was saying.”

While hearing the man’s unpleasant laugh, I decided.

I really need to kill this man first and foremost.

# Chapter 134 – Element Master Vs Hundred Numbers (2)

There were 4 standing in front of me and Lily. 2 on each side and behind us was the black barbed wires. We had been completely surrounded by 8 people.

The problem is how to break through this encirclement.

“Well, I can’t think of anything but using brute force in such a situation—.”

\*ZUDODODON!!\*

“Uoh, what the hell!?”

Suddenly, flames exploded on the right side and swallowed up the 2 experimental bodies standing there.

From inside the smoke, a black figure came out.

“I’m also a member of the party. I’ll be troubled if you don’t make fight as well.”

“Fiona! You came at the perfect time!”

While holding a red wand, Fiona came towards us with her usual expression.

“It seems that the opponent has some sort of connection with Kurono-san but that doesn’t change the fact that we have to defeat them, right?”(Fiona)

“Yeah, after dealing with these guys I’ll explain it to you later.”(kurono)

“I understand.”

Due to Fiona’s surprise attack, the 2 on the right side had already been dealt with.

The experimental bodies remaining are 6. I think we can do this now!

“Lily, Fiona, I leave these guys to you. I’ll take care of destroying their leader.”

“Un, leave it us Kurono!!”(lily)

“Roger that.”(Fiona)

I’m the most suitable to break through with brute force. Lily in her child form and Fiona who is not at max magical energy, these two should have enough power to deal with the remaining 6 experiments.

If I can quickly take care of that disgusting bastard, their chain of command will definitely crumble.

After that we could take down the remaining experimental bodies, or even running away wouldn’t be too difficult. Getting away from here is the priority after all.

There might be a better plan to deal with the current situation but I don’t have the time to do that right now.

“Let’s go!”

Both parties moved at the same time.

“”Black Bullet – Rifle.””

As the bullets were fired towards us from the left and front, the 2 women and one man from the side once again attacked with their swords as well.

“Black Shield.”

I deployed the shield to block the bullets and lowered my body as I began sprinting.

For the time being, my opponents are the 4 in front of me. I’ll leave the 2 on the side to Lily and Fiona.

“Haaaa!!”

I kept on running forward while blocking the bullets with my shield.

They can't stop me from moving with gunfire of such a low level.

Even if I don't use my shield, their [Rifle] that is much less harder than my [Magic Bullet Arts] would be blocked by my [Baphomet's Embrace].

But, just as how the shock of the bullet is still received even when you're wearing a bulletproof vest, I would also feel the impact which is something I really don't want to experience.

In front of me, the two women rushed towards me with  $3 \times 2 = 6$  swords, just like before.

As I looked at their faces again, I felt disturbed as I remembered the faces of my classmates but I quickly shook off my nostalgia, pity as well as sadness and focused on the battle.

“Magic Sword Arts—“

Out of the 10 swords I brought out, I used 6 to block against their [Auto Killer]. The rest 4 were thrown towards the 2 men behind the girls who were providing covering support fire.

While controlling the magic swords and with my shield still deployed, I dashed with full speed by putting power and magical energy in my feet.

The shield had begun to crack from the continuous gunfire but its hardness is still there. I'll just use it to ram into them like this.

It is not as strong as the Tower shields used by the heavy knights but it's enough to stop those girls.

“”Slash.””

“—daaaaahh!!”

The shield was destroyed under the simultaneous attack from the two girls' blackened swords, But,

“—!”

“....”

I brilliantly pushed the 2 girls aside with my shield tackle.

One of them was able to maintain her balance by taking a few steps back but the other one fell down and gave a clear opening.

“Kuronagi!”

Without any mercy, I released my martial art towards the fallen girl.

The black horizontal slash blew away her left arm holding the sword.

I had aimed to spit her whole body but it seems she was able to react at the last moment and evaded.

“Black Smoke.”

Rather than continuing my attack, I decided to use smokescreen.

In the first place, my target was the enemy boss. Rather than staying here to finish them off, it's more necessary to ignore them and move forward.

Also, even though her arm was cut off, I doubt they even have a sense of pain. They would simply keep on attacking while ignoring the injury.

“See ya, I'll be going on ahead.”

I once again ran further as the 2 girls were captured inside the smoke.

Something like a buckshot was also fired from behind me but I ignored it and kept running. I'll leave these 2 to Fiona and Lily.

My next opponents were the 2 men.

”منع انتشار الظلام الجدران السوداء الداكنة الدفاع“

Seeing me rush towards them to attack, they should have understood my intentions even if they don't really have a will of their own.

Stopping their [Rifle] attacks, they began chanting.

Beside them were 4 broken blackened swords. They must have destroyed those I had fired earlier.

Damn, I had used most of my swords during the battle with the heavy knights so these were the last 10 of my swords. Damn them for destroying my precious reserves like this.

Well, thanks to that these guys had been unable to fire when I faced those 2 girls though.

“—Return.”

I called back the 6 swords that had been blocking the enemy's [Auto Killer].

As long as I can see them, I can perfectly control each and every sword and even if they are out of my sights, I can still control them by speaking like this. Thus, the swords returned back and floated behind me.

”“—[Black Wall].””

As my swords returned, in front of me the jet black wall had been deployed.

It was a defensive magic that was able to match my and Lily's combined attack and nullify it. I'm a bit lacking in power for destroying them alone.

“But, it doesn't matter if I have come till here.”

The height of the black wall was around 4m on both sides.

Normally one would advance after breaking it or taking a detour.

But, don't underestimate my physical capabilities!!

“Haa!!”

Kicking the ground hard enough to make it sink a little, I jumped towards the black wall.

I, who had already jumped at about 3m, kicked the surface of the wall again and rose even further.

As I reached the max height of the jump, I was already above the wall.

I stepped on it lightly once again, and crossed over the wall just like that.

“—Pierce through!”

I sent the 6 swords towards the 2 men on the ground.

And I pointed my baton towards that ex-masked bastard that was standing in the middle of the highway.

“Ooh, not bad No.49.”

“Don't call me by that name—“

My eyes met with his in mid air.

As usual I can't sense any killing intent from him. As he released an unpleasant atmosphere, I,

“My name is—“

Instantly, countless black bullets appeared.

Its aim was obvious, the mad bastard from that research facility.

“—Kurono!!” (kurono)

I released a black storm filled with the intent to kill—

# Chapter 135 – Fairy and Witch

## (1)

Fiona and Lily jumped inside the forest from the highway as if escaping from the rain of black bullets.

“I really don’t want to take that attack on with no shield or cover.”(lily)

“Oh, Lily-san you ‘woke up’ now?”

A dazzling emerald green sphere and a black clothed witch were running through the dense green forest.

“You can’t cooperate with the child me. I’m forcibly trying to retain my consciousness, be grateful for that”

Lily in her small form inside the oracle field stares at Fiona with stabbing eyes.

“Thank you for going through the trouble.”

While Fiona expresses her not-very-thank-you gratitude, she swung her ‘Custom Fire Ball’.

The wand reacted to the fire type magic being poured into it. And just like the effect of the magic equation inserted in it, the fireball that is made is always of the same level of power.

But the customized ‘Fire Ball’ makes the formation of numerous Ignis Sagita at the same time, which should have only be fired one by one, possible.

The fireballs fired consecutively intercept the 2 blackened swords coming towards Lily and Fiona like missiles. The blackened swords lose their black magic coating by the explosions from the fireballs and fall down as they can’t be controlled anymore.

“The ‘Dolls’ are all coming here right?”

“1,2,3.....There are 9 in total. Just why might they be multiplying?”

Though the figure of gray colored robe cannot be seen, but Fiona can count their exact amount of number by sensing the subtle amount of magical power.

“It’s obvious that they increased in numbers because you came here. Aside from that, it looks like that flashy man wants to go one-on-one with Kurono.”

Separating his own subordinates personally, is a really convenient choice for this(Fiona & Lily) side.

“Though it is convenient, is that person really that confident?”

It appears like the other side is also wanting to go one-on-one with Kurono.

“Apparently. Most probably, he is the type of guy who has never failed even once in his life.”

“Have you ‘seen it’?”

“Even if you don’t peek in his mind, you can still somehow understand that much.”

“You’re right. There was a person like that in my school too—Isn’t it good around here?”

They just wanted to change the stage of fight to forest and had no intention of escaping. The two stop their legs near a suitable place.

“Didn’t they come faster than expected. This shows that they also took part in the same enhancement experiment like Kurono, right?”

4 people jump out of from the shade of the trees.

The simultaneous attack of blackened swords and martial arts assault Fiona and Lily.

“—『Slash』”

The oracle field in the child form is inferior to the one in the young girl form. It will be dangerous to take the collision head-on.

“『Force Edge』”

The light color magical power compresses on the surface of the globe shape barrier covering the body and two glowing swords appear from the compressed light.

It can be easily understood that the swords, which are releasing heat to approximately 1 metre, can burn and cut the person which touches them with more power than the beam.

Lily moves her small arms and the swords follow her hand as if synchronised. The 2 『Force Edge』 swords, slide past the surface of the barrier.

The 『Slash』 released by the two experimental subjects intersect with the 『Force Edge』 and from their impact instead of sparks, white colored bands were scattered.

After a moment of clashing, as if they sensed the endurance limit of the blackened swords, the experimental subjects draw back their swords.

Another experimental subject in the rear stops Lily's pursuit with 『Rifle』 and within that amount of time the two experimental subjects which assaulted go back in hiding.

“.....As expected the cooperation through Telepathy is troublesome.”

“I still don't really get it.”

Lily gives a fleeting glance to Fiona standing in rear and there a ridiculously large wall was standing.

All the bullets and martial arts are being repelled with the help of 『Terra Shield』

With this its possible to not see the coordinated attacks of the enemy.

Seeing it, one would want to sigh, but

“Hm? Your defensive magic is really convenient.”

A somewhat crooked smile shows up on Lily’s small child face as if she has found the way to comfortably cut their way through the situation.

“Convenient for what?”

“I’ll use my divine protection. Don’t let any enemy come near me, you can do it, right?”

“.....Leave it to me”

Fiona changed her actions as if she understood the intention of Lily.

She takes out her favorite staff 「Ains Broom」 which was stored inside the dimension in her hat and—

「منع صخرة حجر كبير جدار لحماية」

—Starts chanting.

At the same time, Lily fires large amount of light bullets to the places where it seemed like the enemy might be lurking, so that there won’t a chance for them to counterattack.

「ثلاثاء حرق درعا الشعلة لمنع توقف كبيرة」

The black bullets counterattack from the gaps between the light bullets, but it couldn’t interrupt the chanting of Fiona as the chant was completed without a single chanting error.

“—『Terra Armor Shield』

—『Ignis Armor Shield』”

“To be able to make a Dual Shields by yourself. You’re pretty good, aren’t you”

The moment Lily sends a wide grin to Fiona, the two shields cover her whole body.

The thing that first appeared was a rock cliff.

The **『Tera Arma Shield』** didn't appear as a normal rock wall but it appeared as a 10 metres tall rock tower with Lily as the center.

Immediately following, the whole rock tower got covered with magma like flames.

The thunderously burning flames by it's sweltering heat can stop enemy's advance and burn the attacks to crisp.

The dual shield can generally only be deployed by more than 2 magicians help. The shields made from Fiona's astounding power will protect Lily till the time it's magic runs out.

“And so, till the time Lily-san ‘awakens’, I’ll be everyone’s opponent.”

Fiona standing in the rear of the blazing defensive tower with **『Ains Broom』** in her left hand and **『Custom Fire Ball』** in her right.

In front of her are 5 men and women with black hair, black dull eyes and are wearing gary colored robe.

She couldn't make out the position of the other 4 but she has a rough idea that they are waiting for a gap in her stance while hiding in her sides or rear.

The 9 people Lily calls as ‘Dolls’ really don’t have any emotion and don’t have even a speck of fear.

They can shoot swords and control the shooting, they have enhanced body, furthermore their telepathic communication through which, it is possible for a perfect, no-mistakes coordinated attack.

“Please try to come out very fast, Lily-san—”

but, even after accurately knowing the ability of enemy, Fiona says as such with her as usual sleepy face and in a calm and composed voice.

“—If you don’t come out fast. I’ll defeat them all alone.”

# Chapter 136 – Experimental Subject and Researcher

This was sometime after No. 49 had completed many maneuvering experiments.

“Do you not like No. 49?”

Cyprus was suddenly asked such words by the head of third laboratory and the commander of Holy Soldier Project, Bishop Judas. [ET: Holy Soldier project is in simple words the project of experimenting on humans to make them apostles and bastards.]

“No, something like that.....”

He was wearing the white mask which covered his whole face, the 『Filter Mask』, so his expressions couldn't be seen.

However, Judas continued speaking as if he was convinced of something after seeing through Cyprus's heart.

“There are rare cases for people to retain their consciousness.”

“No. 49 has already lost more than 50 % of his consciousness, it's only a matter of time before that also is completely gone.”

“I'm not saying that. He will keep his consciousness till the last moment his ego vanishes and will not go mad till that time, you don't like that, right?”

Cyprus replies with silence.

He looks below to see the figure of No. 49 going back to his isolation cell after defeating 3 golems.

After fighting to the bitter with golems which boast of power that can crush human in one punch, No. 49 had wounds all over his body.

However, in those black eyes, there was still the light of powerful

consciousness and life residing.

(Yeah, you're damn right, I don't like those eyes)

Cyprus was obviously having irritation towards No. 49 who never went insane/mad, and was not depressed even though knowing that an experimental subject has no hope of being saved.

(The things like heart will always break, even resolution, decision too, pride too, in front of 'pain' of reality all those things are bullshit.)

That's why those things are useless, it's not good that you have to keep your consciousness even after reaching here. You asshole foreigners need to cry, scream, go mad, lose all hope and depress before your consciousness is vanished by 『Angel Ring』.

I came to 『White Sacrament』 for seeing 'that thing'. It ain't good if you don't get broken by the method I want.)

No. 49 by dragging his one leg had already disappeared on the other side of the dark corridor.

“—No. 49 is able to keep his consciousness because simple the 'offerings' of him were good, that also helped to enhance his spirituality.” [ET: Seriously don't understand it.][SK: I think he's talking about the offering used in the very first chapter to summon Kurono.]

He suppressed his true feelings, then replied to Judas while pretending calmness from the position of a single researcher.

“If you're convinced with that, then just think like that.”

And then, Judas left as if he had lost interest.

Cyprus saw off Judas while he bowed his head,

(Stop bullshitting!, damn geezer. 'People who can retain their consciousness', to hell with that, it's just that No. 49 has more endurance power in future he will also break without exception. That's right, he can only bear it right now, but that doesn't mean he is special than other foreigners.)

However, No. 49 was able to keep his consciousness without going mad till the time of completion of ego seal with the use of 『Angel Ring』.

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Three steel bodies drilled with countless bullets fell on the ground while making sounds.

“He blocked with those Light Golems—”

The Bullet Arts fired from mid-air captured the man in its line of fire.

But the thing that blocked the rain of bullets was neither defensive magic nor martial skill but it was the Light Golem having the appearance of heavy knights

“—This guy is a summoner, huh”

“I’m not damn normal Summoner. I, the great Cyprus, am a High-Summoner. Don’t even think the peashooter will work one me.”

The man called Cyprus, reveals a calm and composed smile.

He summoned 3 Light Golems as a shield in an instant. From that ability it doesn’t seem like what he is saying is a bluff. [ET: POV changed to Kurono at some point.]

Most probably, this guy has a powerful servant which will be enough to kill me.

“Hey, No. 49, bastard, you thought you could kill me?”

“I am not only thinking, but I will kill you.”

I prepare the hatchet in left hand and call back the two blackened swords which I threw to the two experimental subject behind me.

The two in behind are still not dead, for that reason, I have still the sword arts behind my back as precautions.

But still, the enemy, I, am standing in front of their leader but there is no sign of offense or anything from the two.

“Heh, is that so—Oi!, you both can go to the place with brat and witch.”

The presence of the experimental subject is gone. Looks like they have gone towards Lily and Fiona, but just what is this guy thinking by reducing his allies?

Is he trying to imply that he can defeat me by himself.

“If you can then capture them alive. After I will ‘use them’ later on”(Cyprus)

“You.....”

This is the first time I have ever felt anger to this extent with just some words.

Don’t you speak like a scum-bag towards my friends.

“Ah, What, did you snap? Do you love your women that much, huuh?”

my reply is not words but by sword.

I fire one blackened sword aimed at the glabella of Cyprus.

“haha—”

The fired sword waves and it is sent flying away by the unsheathed sword blade which is glittering with silver glow.

The man draws a longsword with some light residing in it and block the attack of the blackened sword.

He ain’t only a summoner, he is also able to use martial skills like Knights.

“—It’s good No. 49. This will be needed to break you.”

“What are you talking about?”

أسود أبيض أسود——  
”يبتلع الشعبان المقدس السحر تأكل الأسنان“

Cyprus starts chanting by raising the white wand on his left hand.

Like always I don't understand the meaning of those words, but going by the flow of chant it looks like he really is a high-summoner.

”Sword Arts, Pierce Through!“

I won't let a guy who uses magic to complete the chant. I fire all 6 blackened swords.

3 from the front, 1 each from both sides and 1 is heading towards the crown of head. All of them are heading towards their targets while leaving a black line in air.

”Haa, too late!“

Cyprus takes the posture of fencing while holding the long sword in right hand.

But the thing that comes from that is not a pierce, but high-speed consecutive slashes.

The six blackened swords arrive at the same time, but the 3 swords in front get sent flying away with the sword fight.

The 3 swords coming from above and left and right dodge the deflected swords with minimum movements as if they are seeing their surroundings.

The two swords of left and right side come back to me but he sword attacking Cyprus from overhead stabs the ground due to him dodging it.

Before I could call back it, it was bisected by a single strike of silver color and lost the black magic power.

The sword technique of Cyprus who fended off the attacks of 6 swords is far surpassing than that of a normal knight.

But, that only is not the reason to why he was able to easily fend off the attack of Sword Arts.

“Is that made by Mithril?!”

“Fool. It should be obvious with a single glance.”

Mithril is a magical metal made with peculiar manufacturing methods and contains the purest of white magical power inside it.

The light inside the sword blade is not a joke. It's overall weight is like that of a feather but it's attack is more heavier and stronger than steel.

Only because he is using a sword made by Mithril, that he is able to swing it fastly and easily fend off against blackened swords easily.

The base of my blackened swords is a normal longsword which is coated by my black magical power.

On the contrary, the sword blade of the Mithril sword contains high concentration of purest white magic. There is a lot of difference in the amount of magical power which resides in both weapons.

Black magic simply increases the sharpness and hardness, but I don't know which sort of effect does the white magic has on swords.

But no matter what, there is no doubt that it is enhancing something. The amount of magical power in a weapon is equally converted into attacking power, that's why magic weapons are valued highly.

And in the magical weapons, those which give misfortune to the user are 'Cursed Weapons', but now matter how you look at it, the weapon of Cyprus is only filled with purest magical power and doesn't has the least bit of curse or anything.

“Having a wonderful equipment, you son of a .....

There is a possibility that the Mithril Sword will easily stop my 「Curse Grudge Hatchet」「HaraRetsu」, their compatibility is

the worst of all.

“OiOi, it will be a problem if you evaluate me with just equipment? I will have to show you the splendid part of my high summoner position—『Crime Eater』”

THe effect of the chant from before is finally activated.

From behind Cyprus 4 white colored magical circle about 1 metre big rise up.

Looks like the words and pattern drawn on it has some meaning, but it's impossible for me to decipher it.

And after some seconds, the servant called 『Crime Eater』 appears from inside the magic circles.

SFX: Kishaa-!

It is a big serpent with white colored scales. [ET: Do big-serpents love me!]

It's more thicker than my arm and it's overall length is 3 metres. It's smaller when compared to Anaconda, but when a snake of this size does come out in front, the pressure it gives out is no joke.

It is looking at me with red eyes and is waving it's tongue which is split at front. Do I look that tasty?

The animal called snake is able to instill fear in people, but this snake with white body, red eyes like an albino with close remembrance to Sariel is giving me the thought that this guy is a troublesome thing to deal with.

However, the strange thing is, the 4 『Crime Eater』 only wrapped around Cyprus with their tails slightly, but are still floating in air.

If they are that big they should have that much amount of weight, right? Still, Cyprus is standing in a calm and composed manner as if he is not feeling an weight.

“What happened, don't be scared for anymore and come. I am giving you the opportunity to fight the serious me?”

I've got no intention of getting angered on his obvious provocations, but it will be me to attack first as I don't have much time.

I don't know the strength of servant called 『Crime Eater』, so it will be dangerous for frontal attacks, for the time being,

“Bullet Arts”

I'll wait and see its strength with long-ranged attacks.

The several hundred bullets that appear in an instant are fired with just one swing of the baton.

There is no way to escape from this barrage unless he blocks like before and leaps out of the range of fire.

Cyprus is still smiling and shows no signs of landing on ground.

So he chose defense, the moment I thought that all the bullet arts disappeared.

“.....What?”

They didn't waver, or get repelled, but simply disappeared. Yeah, the several hundred bullets vanished in thin air before reaching Cyprus.

Neither did he move nor the snakes too.

What was it, what is happening? Complete Magic Nullification? Does that technique exist?

“Hey, come on fast No. 49”

“Wh—Sword Arts”

Instead of thinking of thinking, it's better to attack right now.

I throw the 2 blackened swords and once again fire the bullet arts.

Cyprus is still standing without any signs of moving, but,

SFX: Sha!

This time the snakes moved.

The 2 snakes move as if they are his new arms and sink their teeths in the two blackened swords coming at him.

The sound of metal resounds and at the same time the black magic covering the sword blade is nullified as if it evaporated.

The snakes spit out the wreckage of the smashed swords with an attitude saying 'Don't make us eat this crap.'

By the time they are doing that, the barrage of bullets are once again vanished after reaching a certain distance near Cyprus.

"I see, I now understand it—"

I drop the baton down and stop the rapid-fire of bullet arts.

I understood that it'd be useless to use it any longer.

"—So the ability of those snakes is to drain black magical energy, right?"

"As expected, even an idiot could understand that much! But, just because you understand doesn't mean you can do anything about it, do you understand that as well Eeh No. 49???"

I finally understood why this guy had been acting so confidently in front of me.

Since he was a researcher as well, he should know that I can only use black magic only.

Then by draining black magical energy, if he could nullify black magic attacks, I would be nothing more than a slightly enhanced human.

The fact that I was the one who went to attack him was a mistake from the very start, but I can't switch with Fiona or Lily now.

Fuck, as expected of a researcher, he has all the things needed to subdue a rampaging experiment eh?

“Since I ran away, you hurriedly prepared that to catch me, is it?”

“That’s right. The moment I found you, I didn’t think I’ll be able to capture you peacefully but I still didn’t actually expect to use these!  
Hiyahaha”

How long is this bastard going to play around.

But still, it’ll be difficult to defeat him now that my black magic is sealed.

Those snakes weren’t just a shield against black magic, but could also normally attack and bite as well. They’re dangerous even without the draining effect.

In the worst case, They might be able to even use some white magic as well.

On top of it, Cyprus has a mithril sword as well and is skilled with it too.

“This is bad, I can’t really find a way to win. What should I do?—”

# Chapter 137 – Fairy and Witch

## (2)

Inside the forest with a firing tower a new flame arose.

“——『Ignis Kris Sagita』”

The intermediate level offensive spell 『Ignis Kris Sagita』 fired by Fiona is activated 3 times faster than normal due to shortening the spell (TN: a.k.a short spell)

Short Spell is the high-class technique of shortening the normal needed chanting spell of any magic. As a matter of course, the shortened part will also have less power than the complete chant.

If 『Ignis Kris Sagita』 is fired normally by Fiona it would make a flaming whirlwind of 20 metres height but with short spell it is reduced to just a little over 10 metres.

However, Fiona is suppressing about 40% of the reduction rate of Short Spell which is the technique to reduce the power of a spell below 50%. The proof of it can be seen by seeing her magic.

“——『Shield』”

Though Fiona's spell power is 60% of her normal power but the spell is of her specialised attribute, so the intermediate spell contains the power of high level spell. This attack can even make the experimental subjects with enhanced bodies to be degraded in pitiable state.

Both of them evade the extreme sweltering heat to the maximum extent possible and block the rest with the help of a dual shield.

Though dual shield won't activate unless their chanting is completed at the same time, but it's not much difficult for the experimental subjects to do it because of telepathy transmission.

Two black shields rise and start defending against the hell-fire, at the same time the two experimental subjects start their counter-attack.

““『Rifle』””

The experimental subjects have already inspected that Fiona's black robe is able to completely block the attacks of low-powered 『BuckShot』 and so they only fire at her using 『Rifle』.

The black bullets fly through the trees. Suddenly, several 『Ignis Sagita』 in the shape of a fire globe come flying in from the opposite side of Fiona, as if intersecting with the bullets.

Fiona was standing right behind the attack, so the experimental subjects had predicted that she has good evasion or defense left. But in reality, the attack not only defended her but also counterattacked.

“—!”

Though it is unexpected action, but the two quickly jump to the left and right and dodge the fireballs.

Fiona is looking at their movements, but suddenly turns her sight to the place from where three presences are approaching at high speed.

“『Terra Blast』”

Fiona strikes the 『Terra Shield』 in front of her with a clunk, which she made for protection against two experimental subjects who attacked her with 『Rifle』.

The lower level ranged attack 『Terra Blast』 uses the rocks in surrounding as bullets and shoots the lump of rocks in the surroundings.

The rock bullets get thrown towards the place with the presence of 3 experimental subjects, but due to Fiona's imperfect magic control the rocks are also thrown in places with no relevance to those three. The Dual Shield made for Lily is also included in its targets. Some rock bullets strike severely against the tower of flame.

(Can't you fight by making less noise?)

Lily's complaints run into Fiona's head.

“I think that I'm fighting by making so less noise that even I'm surprised.”

It's not a joke. Fiona herself is believing that she herself is fighting really good that she can praise herself later.

That is purely because of her wanting to show her good side in front of her companions. As for, if the result is really good or not, then,

(Stop joking around. It's so noisy that one would undoubtedly make mistake in Life Drain if it wasn't for me.)

Just as Lily says, the fight that is happening is really noisy.

In truth, Lily after sensing the fighting going outside of shield, consented as to why Fiona was taken out from parties till now.

Fiona's fighting style is like that of a rogue dragon just firing extremely powerful magic in all directions. Unless someone excels in magic or has tough body like Kurono, no can form a party with her.

But, that was the only thing that allowed Lily to let Fiona enter their, the part of her and Kurono.

“Lily-san are you drawing the magic circle for 『Life Drain』 here, right now?

I think you have some scrolls left”

(I have 1 left. I always save one or two for emergencies.)

“Isn’t that ‘emergency’ right now?”

from above the tree, from the tree shadows, from the rear and from all and every blind spots, blackened swords come flying at Fiona.

(Impossible, something of this level. Isn’t this a wonderful event with crisis coming in?)

“—— 『Air Walker』”

Just at the time Lily’s carefree comment resounds, Fiona starts to evade the line of fire of swords.

『Air Walker』 that she is using is not magic but is a martial skill. One mouth is not enough for Fiona’s talent. She can use Short Spell with high proficiency, uses two-staff-style of 『Ainz Broom』 and 『Custom Fire Ball』 along with activating boost using only magic.

Hence, it’s only natural Fiona chose for an martial skill which can only be activated by her talents.

Although, martial skills including evasion or things like movements are used mostly by classes of Swordsmen or Warriors. A Magician class person can’t just easily get it.

But Fiona was using that martial skill as if natural. Martial skills use different principles than magic in controlling the magical power in body.

『Air Walker』 increases the speed of the person. Fiona enhanced the leg strength and is running so fast that one will definitely mistake it for teleportation.

(Hmm, you can even use martial skills. Looks like witches learn other things than magic too.)

“If I couldn’t do something easy as this, I wouldn’t have graduated.” She is slipping past the blackened swords easily and quickly in his forest with bad footing.

Along with that, she is checking the experimental subjects to launch an attack with 『Custom Fire Ball』

(Schools seems like a hassle. So then, how will one get the so-called ‘graduation’?)

“You’re right. Well the thing which was difficult for me was—— تبادل

”لاطلاق النار على نطاق واسع اللهب مشتعل“

She senses a concentration of a powerful magic from the front. And predicts, that it must be 『Rifle』 with increased power with the help of chant.

“Killing a two-headed salamander—— 『Ignis Over Blast』”

Rather than defensive magic, she chooses the attack magic with large fire area for burning the attack of enemy to a crisp.

The 『Ignis Over Blast』 burns and blocks the surroundings of Fiona with blazing fire, looking at it's firepower one wouldn't say it used a Short Spell.

(I see, Salamander, seems like 'everyone' had the same experience)

“You're right. The subjugation of Salamander is a famous project performed as class project.”

(And, you completed it alone)

“It was supposed to be mandatory for everybody in the class to participate, but for some reason they shunned me out.”

While seeing the flame released by her magic, she recalls a bitter memory of her running from the breath attack from a two-head firedrake.

“I miraculously completed it, , though, I don't want to do it again in my life.”

(Only I haven't fought with a salamander. I want to go and subjugate it at least once?)

The flames calm down and in Fiona's sight once again the green forest, no, the carbonised trees are seen.

Looks like enemy's 『Rifle』 wasn't able to cross 『Ignis Over Blast』 and come near Fiona.

“Do you mean going together?”

(Yeah, together)

Without having any presences coming near, Fiona guesses whether they are devoting themselves to healing because they got hurt.

Though it's a great chance when the opponent is healing themselves, but Fiona didn't pursue them.

That is because her work was stalling, she has no reason to defeat them.

“You're right.....If we three are going together, then maybe I can come along”

(I thought you'd say that. well then, let's end our conversation now  
—)

An, Fiona now understood that she doesn't need to stall them

anymore.

That's right, the outcome is already decided.

“——『Life Drain』”

That is because the preparations for Lily's DP are already set.

“Nh——”

The strong suction of life energy rises up just like a tempest.

Due to that the place with the extreme near Lily is the dual shields which start to collapse.

The the heat of the magic flames is snatched and it vanishes. The rock lose their harness and the magical power inserted in it completely and the tower collapses after the rocks become brittle. The only thing left are the fragments of the rock which constructed the tower.

Standing on top of the rumble is a fairy clad in mysterious emerald colored light.

She is stealing the magical power in surrounding as if it is all her's. The life energy of everything is being snatched away without any mercy, hesitation, restraint or anything. It is just greedily expanding its area of effect.

“The effect does seem fit for a forbidden art”

Fiona murmurs in admiration while seeing the scene of every living thing dying and withering with Lily as the center.

As Fiona is a witch, so her accomplishments in magic must be big that's why she has no trouble in preserving her magical power from being sucked out. Even the things with magical resistance will be able to resist their energy from being snatched.(TN: Magical Power, life energy and every power = Energy...| I can't just type every word every time after all, this ain't Japanese but is English.)

That might be the same for experimental subjects which can use black magic. Even if they have a bit of their magical power snatched but it won't be able to deal damage to them which is convenient to Fiona and Lily.

However, the common flora and fauna won't have their way of life like them.

They will without exception, have their every energy sucked out and will only die.

“Well then, the preparations all done.”

Lily after sucking the energy of everything within 50 metres of radius,

“I can at last kill these dolls, who are bothering Kurono”

revealed a pretty smile on her lovely small face.

“Pure of heart and beautiful, Her Majesty the Queen <sup>『Iris』</sup>”

Fiona silently puts her two wands back in her hat while thinking that her role is now over.

# Chapter 138 – Black Mage vs Summoner (1)

The sword glowing of silver color assaults Kurono as if cutting through darkness.

The feeling of scorching heat starts to spread in the shape of character of one (TN: Horizontal slash like (—)), though the wound is shallow, but the blade has definitely cut him.

“\_\_\_\_”

If that attack was a martial skill, he would've died.

The Mithril Blade easily cuts through the black magic robe a.k.a 『Baphomet's Embrace』 which increases the defensive power of the wearer.

Even if it was a swing of sword, if he took it head-on it would've had become a fatal wound. Kurono evaded with paper-thin difference and somehow runs away from Cyprus's slashing attacks.

“Ora! What happened No. 49. Weren't you gonna—”

4 strong arms attack Kurono who somehow was standing without breaking his stance even after getting a cut near his chest.

“—Kill me??”

They were not arms but 4 『Crime Eater』

The head of snake covered with hard white colored scales capable of stealing the black magic head towards Kurono at high-speed. The impact of the heads easily surpasses the impact of that of a heavy-weight boxer.

“Ku!”

He was able to repel 2 of them with his 『Cursed Grudge Hatchet 『HaraRetsu』』, but was unable to fend off other 2 which

land a strike at him with their heads.

Though Kurono's body weight was far surpassing than that of a normal adult male, his enhanced body and height were also a factor in it, but the head-but of the white big-serpents were able to send him back flying back.

“.....U, It hurts”

To not show any unguarded moment, he stood back while taking a defence stance.

“Hehe, you're still full of energy, so then why don't have another go with higher difficulty”

“Ha, so you were holding back, huh”

With the action of calling back the 『Crime Eater』 the black magical power inside the 『Cure Grudge Hatchet』「HaraRetsu」 was sucked out.

Kurono once again returned the hatchet back to the blackened state by pouring his magical power inside.

“If you couldn't do that it would be boring! From the time I came to Pandora(here), I had been struck with boredom, but it's not good to not have fun when it's fun time.”

In good words to explain Cyprus's dominance would be, he was playing with Kurono.

If the 『Crime Eater』 try not to head-butt, but bite or wrap him to seal his movements, then later Kurono would automatically become disabled after having black magical power sucked out.

And it will be end for him if Cyprus tried to stab him while his movement was restricted, Kurono, who had been defending understood that much.

On the other hand, Cyprus knows his own and his servant's abilities completely, furthermore,

(We, 'Creators' know more about your body than you yourself.)

Cyprus even knows the abilities of his enemy, Kurono.

(No. 49 escaped during the end of the first phase of Holy Soldier Project, and so that bastard can't use any black magic other than instinctively nor can he learn other magics.)

Cyprus understood the fact that 『Foreigners』 which become the experimental subjects are inhabitants of another world.

And the fact that the worlds from where foreigners were called from have no relation to magic was already confirmed.

Hence, it was an established theory that foreigners have zero ability in learning magic by themselves other than the 'power' given by them.

(After all, 『Trans Word』 is always activated and it translates the letters and spoken words. There is no way he can actually learn the real language.) [ET: Trans Word = Translation of Words. I need that thing in my mind so I can TL almost every language of World.]

The fatal disadvantage in not being able to learn various magic like Model magic et cetera was that.

The magic won't activate unless one knows the meaning of the spell and the words written it. Even if one tried to mimic the pronunciation of writing of the spell, the magic won't start ever.

In the first place, it was even impossible for Kurono to mimic the pronunciation or writing of spell, because the language of the world was replaced with Japanese from the start it entered his ears.

“—Bullet Arts”

The cornered Kurono fired Bullet Arts which Cyprus had seen even in experiment and actual practice.

“I'm saying this is useless, you dimwit!”

The Bullet Arts though had the efficiency same to that of a real

bullet, but to Cyprus who controlled the『Crime Eater』it wasn't even a threat of a child throwing pebble at him.

Cyprus attacks straightly without having any need for defence or evasion.

And as if natural the bullets vanish in thin air before reaching the enemy as if putting a drop of water on a hot stone.

But, Kurono surely saw that the bullets reached Cyprus more than before because he poured twice the amount of magical power than before.

“『Lux Slash』”

“KuroNagi!”

The trajectory of white and black intersected.

The remains of magical power of both black and white magic scattered due to the blades exchanging blows.

Kurono took a step back because of the difference in compatibility.

Without a moment's delay, the 4 big serpent assaulted Kurono with a terrifying straight head-butt(Punch).

“Ku, Shield”

He deployed defensive magic, but regrets the moment because it was a bad move.

But, it's truth that he had no other way of defending.

Its result,

SFX: Shaaaa-!

The 4 head pierce through the shield as if it wasn't there and Kurono takes four heavy strikes on his body.

He took a impact very strong that it might have taken his consciousness. Then Kurono saw from the side of his vision that the

place of snake which touched the Shield deployed by him were sucking his black magic form him.

“Gaha, Geho.....”

The once again blown away Kurono, somehow took defensive stance but was unable to stand right up immediately.

And, Cyprus, who didn't had any intention of ending the one-sided fight waited for Kurono to stand back up.

(Don't lose confidence with just this much No. 49. You're the great masochist, who actually completed the human experiments while retaining sanity after all. This much won't mean any shit to you.)

Kurono stood back up while gripping the hatchet with his left hand pushed forward.

In his eyes, the peculiar pair of black eyes, the fighting spirit still hadn't wavered even after knowing the absolute affinity difference.

(That's right, those shitty conceited eyes!

Right now I'm thanking god with my whole heart. After I get a chance to instill insanity and despair in you, in those unyielding-spirited eyes of yours!!)

Cyprus didn't knew that he was laughing, but even if he knew there is no reason for him to stop laughing.

(The 'Real Thing' comes later, beating the hell out of you and bringing you back is only opening performance, but I will have fun,

until you understand that no matter how you struggle, you won't be able to defeat me ever)

Seeing Kurono poise the sword with both hands, Cyprus too poised the sword a second later.

(There is no introduction to martial skills in the first phase of experiments. The 『KuroNagi』 No.49 is using is the curse of that hatchet.

He might be able to kill scum around here and there with the power and weapon ability, but, hmph, that technique ain't much to me who has learned martial skills and equipped with a 『Mithril Sword』 ).

While pushing back the sadism rising from the bottom of heart, Cyprus inspected the weapon that Kurono acquired after the escape.

(It must be good luck that he got a baton for black magic use, but that level of thing won't give much firepower.

He knows that the strongest he has right now is only that hatchet.

It's clear that you don't have any other weapon hidden, after all we have the skill to see through you black magician's dimension.

or rather you don't even have a sword with 『Auto-Killer』 function. Hmph, showing-off against some damn Crusaders. Good work No. 49)

If Kurono had an artifact class weapon or an item, then counter-attacking would have possible.

However, there was no way he had anything like that, that was confirmed with 100% confidence after Cyprus inspected through the 『Shadow Gate』 of Kurono with 『Dimension Search』 .

(The only reliable thing at the end is your own power.

But, your black magic, physical ability too, magical power amount too and the amount you would have grown after escape are already predicted by us, it's impossible for you to win)

Cyprus had always been pursuing human experiments from the time Kurono was brought in this world and made in an experimental subject.

Them, researchers, have the possession of all data about the status of Kurono showing how much he had grown or his growth rate and things like that which even Kurono himself doesn't know.

If one looks at that magic, it was clear that there was no way to

enlarge the magical quantity than what was provided to him.

If the magical quantity and growth-rate was seen as a magician then No. 49 had highest potential, but no matter how high it was, it would be completely empty with just 2 "Crime Eater".

And considering the fact that he hadn't learnt any other magic, then in terms of magic Kurono's growth cannot be estimated more than what he had already learned before.

Also, it was hard to think that there would have been rise in Kurono's physical ability along with him learning martial skills.

The strong factors in the current situation would be Lily and Fiona against whom the experimental subjects were having hard time.

Cyprus was able to know the war situation due to periodic telepathic transmission.

However, he judged that they would be stall both Fiona and Lily till the time he teased Kurono to his heart's content and captured Kurono.

Everything was within his prediction, no irregularity in his plans.

"You're all idiots with no imaginative power, you are also the same No. 49. You still think you can kill me , right!?"

Kurono had wounds all over his body.

Due to the draining of black magic, even if he closed his wounds with black magic, the magic will get drained and result would be blood loss.

It was obvious that he had endurance but it was obvious that it would also get exhausted if the fight would continue like this.

However,

"Yeah, of course, How can I let a shitty ass-hole scumbag—"

Kurono smiled.

Cyprus showed him a deadly stare filled with irritation in his eyes.

“—keep on living in this world!”

# Chapter 139 – The Black Mage vs Summoner (2)

“Yeah, how can I let a shitty ass-hole scumbag like you living in this world?”

Finally, I can finally see the chance of winning.

Cyprus takes stance while thinking my words are just a bluff and is still smiling faintly with disgust.

I grasp the 「Cursed Grudge Hatchet」 in my right hand tightly, and commence the attack having the resolve that I will only get one chance for it.

“Here I go—”

I run straight towards him. That guy is completely underestimating me, and so he definitely won’t use long-ranged attacks.

Most probably he doesn’t have any other way to attack other than sword or snakes, but no matter what, that guy has no intention to thwart my approach and will wait until I get recover my posture. He is giving me excessive service.

Thanks to that, I am able to make a plan to surely kill him.

“—— 「Anchor Hand」”

Normally, this black magic is used for moving up and down on cliffs and walls.

I don’t use it mostly even when it is needed, but this time I pour the most of the black magical power in the black wire and as if rivaling 「Crime Eater」 the 「Anchor Hand」 became of the same width and length as that of the snakes.

I send the 4 log-like wire towards the 4 snakes who are licking their lips to seal their movements.

“Ha, just when I think what you were about to do, you go for such a foolish method.”

Even if he has sensed my intention, he still sends his 4 snakes against my 『Anchor Hand』 as if they aren't a threat to him.

When both of their distance is approximately 3 metres apart. The black and white intertwined and starts their struggle for supremacy.

The tip of the wire, originally have a fishing hook sort of end, but for grabbing the head of snakes, I have made 3 fingers on each of their ends.

On the other hand, 『Crime Eater』 bites at the 4 wires made from black magic to eat them.

“It is directly connected to your body. At this rate your magical power inside the body will also be sucked.”

“Don't underestimate—”

Just as Cyprus said, I can feel my magical power being drained through 『Anchor Hand』

If I cancel 『Anchor Hand』 right now then I can maybe be safe from the drain caused by 『Crime Eater』

But then there will be no meaning then. I bear the pain of my magic power being drained out every second while clenching my teeth and try to maintain the shape of wires trying to capture the snakes.

“—my magical power!”

I take one more step forward.

“OiOi, don't do boring things like falling down due to magical power exhaustion”

I reach the distance where both of our swords can reach each other and I swing my hatchet towards Cyprus who has a complaining face as if saying joy-destroyer.

“KuroNagiiii!”

“Lux Slash—”

SFX: Gakiin!

The moment the two blades come in contact, 『Cursed Grudge Hatchet』 in my right hand easily slips past and flies towards the horizon.

“—Ah?”

My hatchet getting flicked is not a point which Cyprus would think as strange.

But, no matter how much he sees the victory, he wouldn't have felt the power in my strike that should have been there.

It is only natural, after all I never activated the martial skill 『KuroNagi』, just swinged the hatched nothing more.

“I got you—”

I clench fist with my right hand, and my left hand which was originally empty,

“—Blackening”

Shakes off the sword with power beyond my control and I grasp the Mithril Blade tightly.

The sharp edge of blade cuts my palm and blood starts to flow, but as if the blood dropped on the blade is covering the blade, the blade soon enough starts to corrode due to my black magic.

“Ku, Bastard—”

Cyprus shouts out in an impatient voice, but it's already too late.

Your boastful Mithril Sword is now mine.

“Go flying away!”

In an instant black magic covers the white blade and blackening is complete. I start the throwing action which I used instinctively.

“Uooo!?”

Understanding my actions, Cyprus tries to grasp the hilt of sword tightly, but it slips through without any resistance and he flies towards the horizon.

At very close range, the sword is unneeded, it will be good if I just take the sword. I don't have the confidence to pull off Sword Arts in this situation, so for the time being I put my whole power in throwing him away.

In the meantime, in my clenched right hand fist concentrates another sort of black magic.

Controlling 4 extra-large <sup>『</sup>Anchor Hand<sub>』</sub> and Blackening along with 1 more magic is really difficult,

“Pile—”

But, if it's this most simple black magic that I learned at first, then there is no difficulty in activating it.

“Bunkerrrrrrrrr!!”

The Black Magical Power turns into a spiral of destruction and starts swirling around my fist which I punch towards the face of Cyprus.

“Kuo—”

Neither having a way of evading or defending, my fist cleanly hits in the middle of his face.

But, I didn't feel the resistance I should have felt when piercing through someone's head and pulverising his brains. It's hard. As if I had just struck a shield.

“U, oooo.....”

Even so, after taking a clean heat, his nose his crushed and he staggers while his nose is bleeding.

I pay attention to the cross hanging on the chest of the ugly Cyprus as it starts releasing magic light.

I see, so it's a magic item with defensive magic.

Shall I destroy it or cancel it, no, I only have my body now, so

“Breakkkkk!”

I have no other choice than to beat this bastard till he is disabled to move.

“Guu, Haa—”

I fiercely attack Cyprus who is reflexively trying to gain distance.

I can't let him run here so I throw Cyprus down on the road with full force.

And quickly secure the mount position as if sitting on a horse.

At this point of time 『Crime Eater』 has eaten near half of 『Anchor Hand』.

There is not much time left to hold off the snakes. If the situation changes here, then this time I definitely won't have a chance to to reverse it.

“Oraa!”

I earnestly punch with my fist against the shield deployed by the cross.

“Gaha—how can , still move uu—”

I keep beating his face with my fist which is filled with power due to magic and can even break steel right now.

Pierce, Just pierce through this shield!

“Even after—exhausting the magic.....”

Why are you so surprised?

Surely, 『Crime Eater』 has the ability to eat the black magical power but it can only drain a fixed amount of it in a short time.

If it has the ability to completely eat the black magic when it touches it, then it wouldn't have shown any signs of being extinguished from the point it touched at the time of smashing the 2 blackened swords or at the time of piercing the shield.

A normal Bullet Arts would vanish upon reaching a certain distance but the Bullet Arts with double magic power would proceed 30 cm more than normal.

I don't know what the maximum amount of magical power 『Crime Eater』 can eat. But, if it is fixed for a period then I only have to beat the summoner before my magical power is exhausted.

And to my luck, this guy didn't pay heed to my approach.

It would have been better if you just spectated by acting as a summoner and letting your servant do all work, but it's already too late to regret, you shitty scumbag asshole.

“Oraaa!”

The sound of the invisible shield cracking reached my ears.

I can do it, there is still time left.

“Come on! Come on!”

I punch, punch and keep on punching. Though my fists are enhanced by magic, they are still getting injuries due to the recoil of punching the shield.

So what, I can break his shield in a little more time, this pain is nothing.

“Impossible—this is—”

“Come onnnnnnnnn!!!”

I punch with my bloodied fist.

SFX: Gashaaa! (Sound of shield breaking)

And finally, the shield breaks apart.

The moment it is destroyed, the cross too is smashed in pieces and lose its defensive power.

“!? H-hey, Wai—”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”(Kurono)

I raise my right fist, the last attack.

However, at that moment, a sharp pain runs through my right hand.

“Guua! damnit—”

I can't swing my fist, after all the fangs of white big-serpent are biting my right hand.

Crap, so finally my magical power exhausted and 『Anchor Hand』 is forcibly cancelled.

“—Damn it!”

The snakes rush at me after losing their prevention object.

My last weapon, left fist, is also restricted to move by one big serpent.

“Ha,Ha.....Hyaaaahahahahaha! It's too bad No. 49!”

2 snakes stop the movements of my arms and the rest two are biting near my abdomen.

The feeling of my last amount of black magic getting sucked out is more painful than the pain of fangs inside my stomach.

It's as if my life force is getting sucked out, I can't put any power in

my body and consciousness also starts to flicker.

“Gu, Aaa.....”

“Bastard frightening me, you have more magical amount than predicted, really, you are an irritating and annoying bastard!”

Cyprus punches at my cheeks to repay the gift from before.

But, because he is still pinned down his fist lacked force so I couldn't feel much pain. I can understand that he had punched me but it's pain is being suppressed by the pain of both arms and both sides of abdomen.

“Damn it, Damn it, Playing with me, I don't give a damn shit about mission. I am going to rape your women here and then later I will kill you!”

“Stop speaking—”

My no-power-left body floats a bit and Cyprus struggles to stand from his current position.

If he gets up away right here, then my attacks won't reach him.

But, thinking that is useless.

After all, this is my last attack.

I thought this was my end, but thanks to his foul-mouthed provocation, I am able to imagine the pain of losing Fiona and Lily.

Thanks to that, I can muster my last will power to kill you, Thank you. You were truly a shitty asshole scumbag till the last moment.

“Stop speakinggggggggggggggggggg!”

And, I bite at Cyprus's windpipe area.

“Wha—”

I can kill you like the method your prideful snakes use. Though it might be childish and primitive, but I have enhanced strong teeths,

so I can put sufficient power to tear his windpipe.

“oooOOooAAA”A”AAAAAA!?” S-Stop it  
OooOOOaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!”

Thanks to you guys enhancing every nook and corner of my body even my jaws have the power of an average animal.

There is not any hard scales, so I can tear and devour the windpipe of a human with soft skin easily.

“—!!”

While reaching the middle section of throat and neck, I keep on biting and devouring the blood vessels and meat inside there. [ET: Ghoul anyone? of Tokyo Ghoul]

Inside my mouth is iron like taste, the taste of human.

The blood gushing out covers my sight.

“H-Ha—Gaha.....Haha.....”

Cyprus desperately tries to stop the spurt of blood with his both hands that seems like he is trying to wring himself to death.

In his wide opened eyes, I am not even reflected.

His face is that of a human tightly clinging on his last remnants of life while being scared of the approaching footsteps of Death.

“Crap.....My consciousness is.....”(Kurono)

Looks like I can't see his last ugliest moments.

All the power has already left my body, I can no longer feel the pain from my both arms and sides of abdomen.

“Ah—”

Slowly, I fall while facing upwards.

I feel a soft and warm feeling of something on my back.

Within my flickering consciousness and hazy vision came the smile of the goddess of victory.

“—Lily”

“You’ve worked hard. Leave the rest to me and sleep”

I try to say something to Lily who is in her young girl form, but my lips only trembled at bit.

“Good night, Kurono” [ET: It’s only noon though, Damn big volume and day]

# Chapter 140 – Tell Me

Kurono fainted with a peaceful looking expression but his whole body had become crimson red from the large amounts of blood flowing from the wounds.

The method of killing someone by biting off their wind pipe made Kurono look like a mad serial killer but,

“fu,fufufufu you were too cool Kurono!!”

For Lily, the blood-stained Kurono looked more glamorous than a prince on a white horse.

“Oh how lovely! Superb! \*chuu\* \*chuu\*”

Using the fact that he was fainted, Lily gave kisses on his cheek.

“Lily-san, I think you should heal Kurono-san now or we’ll be too late you know?”(Fiona)

Maybe she didn’t think much of Lily’s actions or was maybe too amazed by it, or maybe she was jealous, Fiona came to interrupt Lily with her usual unreadable expression.

This situation where two men were lying in the middle of the road like corpses along with 4 corpses of snakes wasn’t exactly suitable for a romantic kiss scene.

Cyprus’ servants, the [Crime Eaters] were lying dead, not because Cyprus had fallen but because Lily had simply shot them down.

Although, neither Cyprus nor Kurono knew just when Lily had done something like that.

“—n, I guess that’s true.”(lily)

As if she was used to it, Lily picked up Kurono’s body easily.

“It’s really unfortunate but I’ll have to leave Kurono’s treatment to you. You still have the [Fairy’s miracle drug] remaining right?”(lily)

“I don’t mind but, is that fine?”(Fiona)

“It’s fine, I need to—“

In Lily’s line of sight was Cyprus trying to stop the blood flow from his neck as he fainted.

He was on the verge of death but he was still alive.

“—hear a lot of things from him.”

•  
•  
•

As he woke up, Cyprus realized that he was still alive.

“ha, haha—“

He ended up laughing with delight on this miracle.

(“That’s right! I, I am not someone who would die here!”)

Yes, there was no way he could die like that.

After all, there has been nothing that hasn’t gone as he wished till now in his whole life.

Good looks and high physical abilities, having talent in both the sword and magic, and having rich parents, he was a born elite. He was different from others, a man truly loved by god.

Someone like him wouldn’t die so pitifully while fighting against an escaped experimental body.

“Oh, so you’re finally awake Mr. Scumbag?”

The moment he was called ‘scum’ by a voice as sweet as a little bird, Cyprus once again brought his consciousness back to reality from his thoughts.

“—Ah?”

He finally understood his situation then.

Among the lush green tress, a gentle early summer wind caressed his cheek with the sound of rustling of the branches.

Apparently he was sitting with his hands tied back and legs stretched forwards. And judging by the sunlight coming from between the gaps in the leaves, it was still daytime.

“There are a lot of things I want to know from you. It’d be nice if you answered them all honestly.”

In front of him stood a beauty with platinum blonde hair and emerald green eyes.

“You bitch!!”

She was a beauty that would have normally made him fill with the desire to make her his own woman but Cyprus hadn’t forgotten his current situation.

(“No. 49’s woman, that fairy who suddenly turned into a brat!.”)

For some reason, she was supposed to be in a child like form but maybe by using some kind of magic, she returned back to her original girl form.

“You shouldn’t make such a loud noise. Or have you forgotten the condition of your throat already?”

“Tch.....”

In his mind the figure of the truly devil like no.49 biting off his throat appeared.

It should have been a fatal blow but since quick healing had been done, it’ll still take some time to heal completely. Cyprus who was well versed with magic ascertained the condition of his injury and healing.

If we were to make a loud noise, the wound might open again and start bleeding profusely.

“Well, even if you don’t talk, it won’t really trouble me though.”

(“Shit, underestimating me this bitch—“)

He was alive but had become a prisoner. He started thinking about what to do but,

“After all, I only have to listen directly to your ‘heart/mind’.”(lily)

With a girlish smile, a shining white needle appeared in front of Cyprus and he stopped thinking.

Starting from the injections in the facility, he had seen a lot of needles but the one in front of him was bigger and thicker than any of those. It was more like a skewer or a thin stake.

Probably it had been made by her magic and by her words he understood what she was about to do to him.

“You people have done the same thing, it’s only obvious that you’ll realize my intentions, ufufufu.”(lily)

As she twisted the needle as if she was having fun, the girl raised her hand overhead.

What appeared was the same structure that appeared from an [Angel Ring] that could directly interfere with one’s thoughts.

“Now then, first, let’s start with your name.”

“Stop—“

As he tried to speak the words to stop, the girl gave a dazzling smile and brought down the needle while accelerating it with magic.

\*Dozu—\*(sound of stabbing)

Cyprus heard such a dull sound inside his head.

“Ah....Oooah.....”

The giant needle that stabbed into his head turned and scraped at his cranium and aimed for his 'mind'.

Surprisingly, he felt no pain but Cyrus knew what was happening to him as his hair stood on its end as his brain was being violated.

"ooo.....stop.....stop...st....."

While still smiling enjoyably, the girl put more force in it.

Finally, the needle completely pierced through his skull and encroached till the delicate part of his brains.

"—Cyprus Vermani, Oh, you were quite the rich guy. How enviable, I also want to live with Kurono in such a big mansion."

Someone who possesses strong telepathic powers can directly 'touch' and draw out any and all information from the brain.

Even a single human possesses massive amounts of information in their head. To draw out the required data, its best to question them straight and then read their minds to know the answers.

"I don't really care about your personal info though. What I want to know is what kind of connection do 'you people' have with Kurono. How did you 'summon' him to this world? What did you want Kurono to do? What did you do to Kurono? What did—"

Something 'else' ran about inside his head and gave rise to a fearsome amount discomfort.

Violently, forcibly, inside his head, inside his mind, every time that 'something' moved about, some part of his memories got destroyed.

All of that was info she did not need after all. Everything other than info connected to No.49 was unneeded, useless, trash, garbage, and there was no value in leaving such info inside his head.

"C'mon, tell me, more, more about Kurono!!"

Once again a turbulent sound resounded inside his head, the sound of his cranium being destroyed, the sound of having his brains

pierced. The needles being inserted in his head kept on increasing. 2, 3 and more.

All he knew was that ‘something’ was raping his mind vigorously and gave birth to absolute despair that was increasing like surging waves.

“I want to know more about Kurono. I want to know each and everything about Kurono! That’s why, tell me everything about Kurono that even Kurono himself doesn’t know!!”(lily)

The girls voice didn’t reach Cyprus’ ears any longer.

His eyes turned white and he became a cripple as drool flowed from his open mouth. There was no way he could understand words in such a situation.

“Aah, I know! I now know more about Kurono! I can learn more about Kurono!!”

Maybe she realized that he wasn’t responding to words any more, using her telepathy in its original form to communicate directly with one’s mind, she sent direct messages to Cyprus’ brain.

“Doing such cruel things to Kurono, I really cannot forgive you. I’ll completely and thoroughly make you suffer and then kill you.”

In his head, a cruel, genuine killing intent was carved.

As a replacement for his destroyed memories, killing intent, hostility, disdain, abuse, scorn—all sorts negative emotions were crammed inside his head.

Cyprus finally understood that his own ego, his own personality was being destroyed right now.

(“aa.....so this is what .....having your mind broken feels like.....”)

The only thing left to him was,

(“ Oh God.....save me.....”)

To pray to his God for salvation that would be never given to him.

(“Please...save me....save—“)

“ahahaha, that’s it, keep on praying to your god to preserve your mind. After all, the true suffering and pain will start from here onwards. The despair you love so much, I’ll make you fully taste it as well, ‘kay?”

# Chapter 141 – Unlock

“—Uh!?”

I jumped up the moment my consciousness came back.

I had almost tied my battle with Cyrus and I feel like I saw Lily's face in the end.....no, before that let's confirm the situation.

In front of me was the highway leading to the faraway Gallahad Mountain ranges and the black figure beside me was,

“How did it go, Fiona?”(kurono)

“It's all fine. Everything's over.”

The witch gave the answer with her usual expressionless face.

Everything's over, that means for the time being, the danger should have receded. I feel relieved.

“How long was I asleep?”(kurono)

“Around 30 mins. Just now, the last of the light golems was defeated and the enemy force has been annihilated.”

As I looked around, the remains of the light golems, who wore the just-for-show armour, were lying around all over the place.

The adventurers who defeated that doll squad were quickly fixing their carriages rather than wasting time to enjoy their victory. Some were dealing with the barbed wire spread on the highway and were trying to deal with the problem.

“I should also go and help.”(kurono)

We have been unexpectedly delayed already, we should quickly move away from here before the Crusaders come attacking.

Although I tried to get up, I couldn't muster strength inside my legs and had to use the tree on which I was leaning on to get my body

up.

“Your wounds have been healed by the Fairy’s miracle drug but it doesn’t bring back your magical energy. It’d be wise to not move about too much.”(Fiona)

“So it seems. Shit, draining me like that, that bastard.....”

I was feeling no pain but my body was filled with lethargy and fatigue and it was difficult just to move my body.

Magical energy is an energy vital to sustaining life. If you lose too much of it, you’ll get the same symptoms as losing excessive blood.

It’s really pathetic but in such a condition, I can’t help anyone and will only end up being a hindrance. I should just wait here and restore my energy.

But I’m really lucky that my wounds have healed up. Because, my [Baphomet’s Embrace] is currently completely in tatters.

It had been cut apart by the mithril sword, and the arm section bitten off by the [Crime Eater], which made the sleeves only half now.

If it had been damaged even a little more, it would have completely lost the demonic energy residing inside of it and would not have been able to regenerate back to normal.

Even if it was a magic item, if it was destroyed too far, nothing could be done any more.

While thinking that it would take some time for the robe to restore back to normal, I once again sat back near the foot of the tree and talked to Fiona.

“What happened to the experimental squad? Were they all killed?”(kurono)

“I and Lily-san took down 9 of them. Their ability equal to that of a rank 3 team but after Lily-san’s [Mind Jammer] activated, it became too easy.”(Fiona)

I guess they really were completely dependent on telepathy for coordination. Since they don't have any personalities, it's only normal that they couldn't adapt themselves after their communication was jammed.

"But still, you guys did well actually activating that. Or rather, wasn't Lily using her DP?"

"Yes, I used defensive magics to give Lily-san enough time to activate her DP."

She said that so easily but isn't that pretty damn amazing? At least it's a tactic impossible for me who can only use Black Shield.

"The majority of their squad was mixed up with the light golems and were fighting with the adventurers. Since Kurono-san took down their leader, they all retreated."(Fiona)

"I see, if they retreated then, well there's neither any reason nor enough power to pursue them. It'd be better to just leave them alone. So, how's our damages?"

"There were no casualties."

That's actually very unexpected. No well, it's a really happy thing that no one died but considering the enemy's abilities I was prepared to face some casualties.

"Were the ones mixed up with the light golems that weak?"(kurono)

"No, it seems the enemy was trying to capture us. The adventurers who were defeated had been injured but had only been restrained after making them faint. When they retreated, they left them so we were able to save those adventurers."

"Now that I think about it, that guy did say something about a mission....."

Probably, they would have been experimented upon like me.

Now that they have occupied Daedalus; it disgusts me to think like

that but they should have lots of ‘demons’ to use for such purposes.

But even then they tried to capture us all the way here; does that mean they wanted some strong ones like the adventurers?

“un, that’s more or less correct.”(lily)

“Lily!?!?”(kurono)

The one who suddenly answered by internal monologue was, as expected, the girl Lily.

“Oh Lily-san, are you done tort—interrogating him?”

Wait, wasn’t an extremely dangerous word about to leave her mouth? Was it just my imagination?!

“I heard everything I wanted to hear.”(lily)

Lily answered with an elegant smile but her eyes had a somewhat sharp light inside it.

“What do you mean.....by interrogation?”(kurono)

“I just asked some things from that man called Cyrus. Information gathering is also very important you know?”(lily)

“I didn’t really think that he’d explain everything very easily though.”(kurono)

“That’s, well, I just used my amazing telepathy a ‘little’, get it?”(lily)

She smiled as she winked towards me.

What exactly does she mean by ‘little’; she seemed to be not inclined in explaining so I decided not to pursue it either.

“Anyway, to explain in short, they were a squad deployed to capture strong people like us as experimental subjects. It seems it was some sort of a secret so they were pretending to be a mercenary group to mix in with the Crusaders and were looking for good

‘subjects’.”(lily)

“Was it the same mercenary group that tried to attack us straight the day before yesterday?”(kurono)

“Yes, it seems it was done to get rid of the adventurers mixed in their merc group and then use that battle as an excuse to withdraw themselves from the Crusaders forces.”

I did think that it was a useless attack but I see, so there was reason like that behind it.

The Republic’s adventurers who were trying to make it big were really pitiful. We were the ones who actually killed them though.

“Also, by breaking through the forest with small numbers with brute force and summoning a large amount of light golems, they made it look like we had been surrounded in Alsace and made us retreat. After luring us this far, they would attack us where the Crusaders couldn’t see.”(lily)

“And we completely walked right into their palms.....how pathetic.”(kurono)

Although I’m glad that we were able to repel them off brilliantly like this, if we had been captured, our fates would have been far worse than death.

And that would apply not just to me but to all of my comrades as well. Although it’s a bit late, but it still is quite a frightening thing to imagine.

“By the way Lily-san, did you get any other info? For example, about the organisation that built these Experimental bodies etc?”(Fiona)

Organisation, is it? It must be a disgusting group of worthless people but now that they have appeared in front of me like this, I need to know as much as I can about them as well.

“The organisation is called the White Sacrament. Its founder and the person in charge of these experiments is Bishop Judas. The

human experimentation that Kurono went through was one part of the plan called the Holy Soldier project. I was able to find out these three things clearly.”(lily)

I see, it's a pretty easy to understand composition.

Bishop Judas must be that proud-looking geezer that didn't wear a mask back then. Cyprus also knew my face and told me that I should ‘ask that geezer in Elysion’ as well.

The founder and the person-in-charge eh? If, If that man came inside my reach, I will definitely kill that geezer at all costs.

But, the Holy Soldier Project, are we supposed to be the soldiers of God?

“Selfishly calling us here and making us into pawns of God, those fucking bastards....”

White Sacrament, Judas, alright, I'll remember them.

Right now, I don't have the strength to stop you bastards from continuing the experiments but still, one day definitely I'll make you pay for playing around with our lives.

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.

.

Inside the forest, a single corpse was sprawled along the ground.

At a single glance, it looked like a burnt corpse but everything above the eyes had been completely blow away so it was difficult to tell whether the cause of death was the fire or due to the head being blown off.

And except the one who did this, nobody else knew the actual answer.

“Wow, you really were killed in such a flashy manner Cyprus.”

Or so it was supposed to be.

A figure looked over the corpse that once belonged to a man named Cyprus.

“That fairy looks cute but totally lacks the screws in her head. It looks like an act done by an Executor of the inquisition, right Tsumiki?”

Blonde twintails and a slender waist. Both the armour on her body and the weapon on her back were meagre ones. She was the girl who only looked like a newbie adventurer, Ai.

Even in front of the cruelly slaughtered corpse, Ai kept on smiling and talked to the black cat Tsumiki beside her.

“She had used a low level fire intentionally to slowly and carefully grill him. On top of it, the nails stuck to his head also had [Pain Increaser] and [fainting obstruction – Wake Up] activated as well. Not to mention that she had also used heal magic so that he didn’t die too quickly. I guess it’s normal for the corpse to turn out like this. Well, in this case he simply reaped what he sowed, divine retribution, something like that.”

Ai gave her thoughts about the torture show that had continued for around 20mins but the cat Tsumiki only gave a \*nyaan\* sleepily.

But without minding her cat, she continued talking.

“fufu, then let’s stop with my ‘Binding play’ here and I should go and greet that devil and the fairy—“

Ai touched the silver bracelet on her hand that was the most valuable looking equipment in her possession.

“—Seal Unlock.”

Along with her words, the silver bracelet broke off and was removed from her slender wrist.

That instant, her normal looking atmosphere instantly changed.

If a third party was here at this moment, he would have felt as if the air or the scenery had changed.

She who was suddenly releasing an immense amount of presence finally showed a change that could be visibly seen.

Sparkling, hazy silver aura rose from Ai's body.

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After removing the black barbed wire that had been probably created by the experimental bodies with black magic, and by the time everyone prepared to depart with the carriages, I had also become able to move around freely.

We had wasted quite a lot of time here but there were still no signs of the Crusaders approaching us from the back.

It's still unknown how much time it would take for them to catch up with us if they start pursuing us seriously so we need to create as much distance as we can or I won't be able to stay relieved.

Also, in the previous battle, although there were zero casualties, there were quite a lot of injured ones. Actually, the ones without any wounds were the rarer ones.

I'm glad everyone had prepared their carriages for the purpose of escaping each and every one. For the time being, we could move as long as we could lay them inside the carriages.

“Alright, everyone is ready right?”

Then let's depart, the moment I was about to shout that and get on my carriage,

“——Everyone get down! Black Shield!!”

As I shouted at once, I deployed defensive magic at full strength.

That's because spears of light came down raining on us from the sky, no they should be called pillars of light.

What the hell is that? Were there still enemies hiding there? Rather than that, if those giant and thick things exploded as well, shit, it's like a goddamn missile!

“صخرة على نطاق واسع لمنع الجدار”——[Terra Wall Defan].”

From behind me, a high speed chant was heard. Fiona, is it?

Even faster than I realized that, a defensive magic much better than mine appeared as the earth rose like a intermediate level wide range defensive magic.

With tremors like a small earthquake, a cliff rose right in front of me.

It's not an actual cliff but it was big enough to feel like that. It's width was enough to perfectly cover the highway to both the sides.

The moment that a much larger than normal [Terra Wall Defan] was completed, the pillars of light finally arrived.

\*GAGAGAGAGA——\*

The row of light pillars struck the cliff's surface from above.

The Terra Wall Defan was made of stiff and sturdy rocks but the pillars of light stabbed through it as ignoring the wall.

The pillars of light seemed as if they would completely pulverise the wall but contrary to expectations, they stuck on the wall like the steel frame on a concrete block.

“.....they won't explode right?”

The moment I said that, as if remembering it, a rumbling sound came as the cliff began to crumble.

A large amount of rocks scattered on the highway and only the pillars of light stuck on the ground remained.

They lined up in a grid pattern to seal off the highway.

Maybe this might be a derived version of a light type defensive magic.

But that doesn't mean I can let down my guard. They might explode the next moment. Or maybe these were meant to stop us and now attack magic would come flying towards us.

“Ah, sorry, you don't have to be so alert, you know?”

Suddenly, the nonchalant voice of a girl came.

The tone of the voice was like it was meant to spoil our vigilance and alertness. Though, of course, not a single one among us did that.

“.....Who is it?”

Since the voice came from beyond my shield, she must be standing in front of me.

If I were to believe her words, it seems the enemy doesn't intend to attack me instantly.

Resolving myself, I removed my shield and looked at the enemy in front of me.

“Nice to meetcha, I'm Ai!”

On the other side of the grid made by the light pillars, a single girl was standing.

Her shining blonde twintails gave her a slightly childish look but they really suited her round blue sparkling eyes and cute face.

Her armour included a simple leather breastplate, boots and gloves and beneath it was a thin shirt and a miniskirt. It really didn't look like it had any magical enchantments or effects.

She really looked like a newbie adventurer from every angle but from her small body,

“No, no way.....”

I can never forget, it's the same silverish aura that was enveloped Sariel which was created from her thick white magical energy.

But this girl was definitely not Sariel.

But still to have that aura means,

“.....an Apostle?”

The girl, with a wide smile that might make one remember of a sunflower, answered.

“Yup. I'm the 8th Apostle Ai!” [T/N: Ai uses ~ desu a lot at the end of her sentences when she's acting cute.]

She named herself as if it was a light joke.

But that's impossible, it can't be, such words of refusal didn't hold any meaning in front of that silver aura.

Right, I should just accept it that the impossible has now become possible. The worst case where an Apostle has appeared.

“Now then, Devil-san, wouldn't you keep me company for a while?”

And thus, the 8th Apostle Ai stood in my way.

# Chapter 142 – The Circumstances of the 8th Apostle

In the plaza of Alsace Village many soldiers were waiting with the cavalry troops at lead.

The safe and sound Pegasus Knights Group was also included in them.

Their mission was to pursue the demons who planned the escape and had run away from the village. The preparations for departing were already completed, but they were still on standby.

After all,

“Please wait some time before pursuing.”

Sister Silvia had stopped the Norz, who was in high spirits to pursue.

“What did you just say, Sister Silvia?”

It was impossible to not hear her clear tone and words unless one was deaf.

The reason he asked her back was to give her the chance to correct her words.

“I said to wait some time before pursuing. If you couldn’t hear it then there is a possibility of your ear having problems. Shall I use Laser Heal?”

It seems like because of not hearing her poisoned words for some time now, My proficiency in the ignoring skill has reduced.

He had a feeling of praising himself for not punching her who was standing in front of him.

“You, surely aren’t connected to the demons, right?”

There won’t be anything good in her other than her outward appearance if she is like those demons. It will need to ‘Dispose’ of this conceited adjutant, or rather I want it to happen.

The bloodthirst in Norz eyes was the real deal.

However, Silvia didn’t show any sign of fear and continued her words with her usual cool attitude.

“Head Priest Norz, it will be in your good interests if you hear this quietly, after all, this is an order.”

“Order? Order you say, impossible, just who got the balls to give me some orders here, huh!”

He shouted in a loud voice that his subordinates would shudder up if they heard it. Silvia takes out a single sealed letter with an expression that said she was fed up from him.

“Go ahead and read it”

Norz took the sealed letter as if snatching, and was about to see inside but stopped his movements after he saw the red sealing wax on the letter.

“This is the.....Holy Cross Insignia?”

On the sealing wax of the Church, which was leading the Crusaders, there always was a mark of Cross imprinted in it.

The sealing wax on the sealed letter in Norz hands, had the mark of Cross with a different design from normal ones.

The people who could use the Holy Cross Insignia as a sealing wax were only Pope or Cardinals. In other words, there were only 4 people in this world who could use that seal.

And, to a cross believer getting a sealed letter with Holy Cross Insignia as the sealing wax, it would be like getting a written order from heavens.

Norz who understood all that in an instant, completely vanished his anger and unsealed the letter with wavy hands.

“Are these the orders from His highness, Cardinal Mercedes.....”

Upon reading the content of the document, a streak of cold sweat poured from his face.

“I-Impossible.....The 8th Apostle you say!”

“Have your head calmed down a bit now. It is not unusual for the armies of republic being under the command of Apostles temporarily.”

The contents of the document written by Cardinal Mercedes were the words of Silvia 「When the time comes, get under the command of 8th Apostle and quietly follow the orders.」 written in a roundabout manner which was the characteristic of a high-ranking clergyman.

“That’s not the problem! Just who is the 8th Apostle. Don’t tell me       ”

Norz looked at Sister with red hair standing in front him.

“No, it’s not me.”

“H-Hah, I see, don’t scare me like this—”

“My superior is the 8th Apostle, though”

“What did you say?!”

Norz yelled as if surprised while spitting out saliva. Silvia instantly took a step back and escaped the range of fire.

“No way. Sister Silvia you are Cardinal Mercedes’s—”

“That is a delusion you made on your own accord.”

Silvia wasn’t foolish as she knew what Norz had thought about her.

“My head is 8th Apostle Ai-sama. She is quite a wild person, that’s

why someone like me takes care of the ‘miscellaneous matters’.”

“Ai? I seem to have heard this name somewhere.....”

Other than being angry at Silvia calling the work of adjutant as miscellaneous matter, Norz was trying hard to find the person named Ai.

“It is only a temporary social position, that she is an adventurer in the Cyprus Mercenary Group. The adventurer who came back alive alone from Irz Village, is Ai-sama.”

“Ah, Aaaa!? That foolish looking brat, huh!?”

“Be careful of your words. Or else do you want to be condemned to be crucified due to lese majeste.”

“Ku.....but, she doesn’t has look anything like an Apostle.....No, the 7th Apostle Sariel is also an exception, it’s only natural for people like her, huh”

He recalled the appearance of Apostles, it won’t be strange for a child or woman to be an apostle too.

And along with it, he recalled the rumours about 8th Apostle.

“I see, 8th Apostle, eh.....Well, it’s no wonder nobody found out her identity”

“I’m thankful that you can understand it.”

Norz who had calmed down, asked a question to his adjutant, no, the direct subordinate of an Apostle.

“And so, the standby orders are given from 8th Apostle, huh?”

“She said she wanted to fight against ‘Devil’ and not to let anyone near because it would be a hindrance in the duel”

“To defeat the annoying devil, huh. It’s somewhat regrettable that the good part will be taken away, but I don’t have any say here if an Apostle of the Republic says so.”

Apostle and Devil. It wasn't even needed to guess who was stronger.

Norz revealed a faint smile after the death of Devil who had killed many of his soldiers, had been confirmed.

“Well, who knows.....After Ai-sama returns you will get your commander position once again, then continue the pursuit or whatever you want.”

“An apostle herself has gone, won't the demons be annihilated?”

Norz knew that the Apostles had the power to kill even the mob of demons under the command of Devil along with devil easily.

Surely, Norz dealt heavy damages to them in the battle, but he had no confidence in winning against the apostles.

“She didn't have any interest in other demons, so maybe she will let them run.”

“W-What!? Then there won't be a meaning to it!”

“That's why, at that time you will pursue them and kill them. Simple as that. Right now it will be good to at least complete the preparations to cross Reine River.”

“Gu.....”

He thought that only a fool would let the demons escape, but there was no change in their mission, it would be the very best to listen to Silvia's words and so Norz agreed to her words due to thinking rationally.

“Ah, aside from that, please complete the preparations to greet Ai-sama when she returns. She has been lamenting that she wasn't getting any good thing to eat recently.”

“.....Got it, I will complete the preparations.”

Damn Selfish Apostle, she should learn something from Sariel-sama. Norz nodded while he cursed within his heart.

# Chapter 143 – Handicap

The pillars of light that had struck the ground in a grid pattern as if to block ones advance had already disappeared.

The carriages filled with adventurers ran away at full speed through the highway. As I saw them off as they disappeared, I finally relaxed, yet at the same time I also felt a bit lonely.

But, now's not the time to get all emotional.

At the cost of letting those adventurers run away, I, no, we are supposed to face the 8th Apostle in a battle.

“nn mou, don’t glare at me like that. Look, we are just having a duel after all, let’s have fun alright?”

The Apostle known as Ai seems to like talking a lot unlike Sariel.

Although she talks in a ridiculous manner, it seems she has an interest in me and Lily.

She probably hasn’t considered Fiona in her thoughts because probably she hasn’t seen her full strength.

“I let them run away right? Try to believe in me a bit!”(Ai)

“.....I see.”

Is what I say, but I have no intention to believe her unconditionally.

Her wish is to fight us. If we faced her without running away, she said that she would not attack and pursue the adventurers as well as the refugees.

Disregarding the danger to our lives, it’s a really incredible condition which would help us in finishing this emergency quest.

But still, there’s no proof that she would keep her promise. She could easily break her promise just on a whim and we don’t even have the strength to go find fault with her for that.

Yes, the moment the existence called an Apostle appeared, there was no scope for negotiations at all. If we don't play along with her whims and wishes, we would be annihilated here anyway.

“Kurono! We'll be fine if we are all together!”

The child Lily claimed that strongly as she pulled on my robe.

“Yes, it seems the opponent only wants to have a test of strength. There's chance that we won't be killed even if we fight her.”(Fiona)

Fiona gave her surprisingly slightly negative opinion.

“.....yeah, well we can't step away from it anyway. Might as well do as much as we can.”

The ones who will face the Apostle are me, Lily and Fiona, basically the members of [Element Master].

According to this adventurer wannabe Apostle,

“If you're in a party then you must fight together!”(Ai)

Said something like that and wished to face our party together. Of course, I had no reason to refuse her, not that I could have anyway.

Rather than thinking that I ended up dragging Lily and Fiona with me as well, since we are in a party, our lives are already supposed to be one, I should have already resolved for this.

That's why, I will not do something like apologising to those two.

“Say, say, Devil-san,”(Ai)

A nonchalant came to us as if ignoring our tension completely.

By devil, she must be talking to me.

During the battle at Alsace, the Crusaders did call me a Devil or something so I realized that I had been apparently given such a dishonourable nickname.

“What is it?”(kurono)

“Devil-san and the Witch-san over there seem to be quite tired. Haven’t you used up more than half of your magical energy?”

Maybe she had a skill that could discern the amount of magical energy possessed by someone else, she spoke that with much confidence.

A handicap/disadvantage for one’s enemy is not something one should say out loud normally but I guess things like that don’t hold any meaning towards Apostles.

“And, what about it?”(kurono)

“That’s troublesome for me, so—“(Ai)

She rummaged through the pouch on her waist and,

“—quickly restore yourselves completely, ‘kay?”(Ai)

Saying that, she threw a small bottle towards us which I reflexively caught with my hands.

The 10cm big container was filled with a water like transparent liquid but some light particles were shining inside that liquid.

It’s probably some kind of a potion, I think but,

“It’s an Elixir.”(Fiona)

Fiona gave me the answer from the side.

“Elixir? It has quite the exaggerated name but is it amazing?”(kurono)

“It’s the greatest potion in existence, at least on the Arc continent.”(Fiona)

“Show it to Lily, Show it to Lily as well!”(lily)

It’s apparently amazing but how amazing is it exactly?

At least it’s not some kind of explosive so I gave it to Lily.

As Lily took the shining bottle and inspected it with a serious gaze, I asked Ai.

“Do you want us to drink this?”(kurono)

“Yup.”(Ai)

Ai nodded with a smile. Well I didn’t think there would have been any other reason for giving us that.

“Okay.”(kurono)

“Oh, you don’t doubt that it’s a poison or something?”(Ai)

“There’s no meaning to do something like that. Also, weren’t you the one who asked us to believe in you?”(Kurono)

“fufuu, I see, yup yup, I really like honest and good kids like you. Well, that Elixir is my treat to you so drink it all!”

While looking at Ai, who was smiling happily, with a cool gaze, I turned to Fiona and Lily.

“Let’s divide it in three.”(kurono)

The order of level of magical energy exhaustion was Me>Fiona>Lily, but it wasn’t like Lily wasn’t tired at all. If we were going recover, we all need to do so.

“I think a single sip would have enough effect. It won’t be much trouble to split this much in three parts.”(Fiona)

“Then, Lily can go fir—“

“Here Kurono!”

Interrupting my words, Lily handed back the potion back to me.

“n, oh right I should still first check for poison just in case.”

There’s no proof that this liquid was actually an Elixir. I can’t have Lily drink something suspicious like that.

Rethinking again, I came to the conclusion that this was also the job of the leader and opened the bottle and gulped the Elixir.

“——!? This is.....what incredible recovery power!”

Even though I had barely 10% of my magical energy remaining; I could feel my black magical energy steadily filling back like petrol being filled in the petrol tank.

Compared to other potions and healing magics, my magical energy regenerated with an extreme speed and even my fatigue was blown away.

My wounds, magical energy, stamina, all recovered almost instantly. It really has an incredible recovery power.

“So it’s the real thing it seems.”(Fiona)

“Yeah. Well, even if this wasn’t actually an Elixir, it doesn’t change the fact that its power is the real thing. Then next is——”

I began to give it to Fiona who was the second most tired among us but,

“No! Next will be Lily!!”(lily)

Once again, I was interrupted by Lily.

Somehow she’s being unusually wilful today. What made her suddenly attracted to this? Could it be that she’s affected by the fact that this elixir had higher efficiency than her miracle drug?

“Only drink half of it, alright?”(kurono)

“Un!”

Lily took the bottle with a happy smile.

Holding the bottle firmly with her two hands, she licked the rim with her small mouth as if tasting it and then after she was satisfied, finally gulped down the Elixir.

“—puhaa.”

After drinking exactly half of it,

“My turn.”

Lily, who seemed to have no interest in it any longer, gave it to Fiona

But her face looked somewhat satisfied as if she had just completed some hard work.

“n, this feeling, it really is an Elixir.”

Fiona gave such an impression after drinking while I was unaware.

“It didn’t really have a taste, but can you tell?”(kurono)

“The feeling on drinking it is somewhat different from normal water. It feels somewhat like Sake though it might be difficult for you to understand that since you haven’t drunk this before.”(Fiona)

Well, now that she said it, I did feel it gently melt away-like sensation when I put it inside my mouth.

I did hear a same impression when my parents had drunk a high class wine a long time ago.

Does this Elixir have alcohol content in it as well?

“Anyway, with this, we have fully recovered. Whether we’ll be able to win against an Apostle or not even then is different matter altogether though.”(Fiona)

“Don’t say such things.”(kurono)

We can win if we fight hard with all we’ve got! But it’s really bitter that I can’t really say that out loud.

But, I and Lily have experience of fighting against Sariel and Fiona is originally from the Republic as well so she should be well aware of an Apostle’s strength.

None of us could easily say that 'We'll defeat the Apostle!' unfortunately.

"But still, we must make plans with the intent to kill her....."(kurono)

I once again turned back towards Ai.

"\*yawn\* ~"

This bitch, yawning like that! Even though she was the one who came and attacked us, does she even have the will to fight us?

"aa~aa, say, you did drink the Elixir right? Then take a rest now. You'll probably recover to your max strength in one hour." (Ai)

"You'll wait that long for us? You really are a patient person." (kurono)

"Well it's not like the Elixir recovers someone absolutely instantly after all. I have no choice but to wait for you. Also, don't you need some time to make some plans as well, right?" (Ai)

"If you're really going to give us that, then I'll gladly take you up on the offer." (kurono)

It seems she really want us to fight at full strength. She is being thorough enough to not let us be in any kind of disadvantage.

"Oh right, my weapon is just this bow and I won't use my armament scriptures so no need to worry over that." (Ai)

She said that as she swung her worn out long bow that seemed on the verge of breaking.

The Armament scriptures were I think the amazing weapons made for the personal and exclusive use for the Apostles. Fiona did talk about that as well.

This Ai as well as that Sariel, it seems Apostles really like to hold back when fighting.

It really is extremely irritating. Even though we are fighting with our lives on the line, she just went and intervened just to play around.

“....Got it.”(kurono)

“nfufu, to not get angry even though I am clearly giving a handicap, you really are a honest and good kid Devil-san.”(Ai)

Unfortunately, I am neither a proud warrior nor a noble knight. I’m just a simple adventurer. If you’re giving me an opening I can take advantage of, I’ll be glad to use it to the fullest.

But that doesn’t mean I’ll actually thank you for it though.

I turned my back to Ai once again and went and sat down with my back towards one of the trees on the side of the highway.

The two of them also sat down on the soft grass near me.

“\*Yaa~wnn.....”

Ai sat down on the other side along with her pet or maybe her familiar black cat.

While sitting in that lazy posture, she closed her eyes and soon the sound of her sleeping came.

Completely defenceless, without any caution, she’s completely looking down on us but considering her ability and strength, I can’t be rash and just attack her madly.

Rather than getting irritated, I should be happy that at least she won’t just rush in to attack us in a weird way out of nowhere.

“Now then, we need to think of a way to defeat that ridiculous Apostle in this one hour. Got any ideas?”

# Chapter 144 – Element Master Vs The 8th Apostle

As the sun began to set and the sky started becoming redder, Ai finally woke up from her deep sleep.

“Nn?”

As she opened her eyes, with the setting sun as the background, the devil, the witch and the fairy were standing and facing her.

“I expected you guys to come attacking at me without warning but, nfufu, it seems you’re quite the gentleman, Devil-san.”

Clearly, a lot more than just one hour had passed but she was the one who had been sleeping, and its not like she was in any hurry so there were no problems really.

Ai was just satisfied if the opponent had finally become ready to fight her.

And, she had expected them to surprise attack her while she was sleeping ‘like an adventurer’, but the fact that she was proven wrong made her sad as well as happy at the same time.

“I’m not a Devil. My name is Kurono Mao.”

“I see! So you’re not a devil but a demon king, ahhahahaha!”(T/N: in case you didn’t know, Maou = Demon King in Jap)

First a Devil, then a demon king. Kurono moved his eyebrow on Ai’s loud laughter and glared sharply at her with his evil looking face as if to not allow any action made by her to be left unnoticed.

“While we’re at it, I’d be happy if the witch girl and the fairy who grew up suddenly could also name themselves.”(Ai)

Kurono looked towards the two girls beside him.

“Fiona Soleil.”

“Lily.”

The witch Fiona who gave her name quite politely and the fairy Lily who was clearly releasing an immense amount of killing intent.

Satisfied after hearing their names, Ai nodded and jumped up from her lying posture instantly.

“I named myself earlier as well but once again, I’m the 8th Apostle Ai. Ah, by the way, this is Tsumiki-chan, cute isn’t it?”

She showed the black cat in her hands. Probably, the cat had no interest in the three standing in front of it as it just gave a small \*nyaan\*.

“Is that a familiar servant of yours?”(kurono)

“nn, oh, don’t worry, I’ll be fighting alone. Now then, Tsumiki-chan go and wait for your master like a good child ‘kay? I’ll show you your master’s cool form!”

Tsumiki who got away from her restraints ran away quickly inside the forest and disappeared.

“Nn mouu, I wanted you to cheer for me——well, whatever. Then, you guys, come at me whenever you are ready!”(Ai)

And thus, Ai faced the three of them with the highway in middle of them.

There was no signal, but, at that moment, the curtains on this fight were definitely opened.

“——Let’s go.”

The first one to move was Kurono.

The moment he swung his baton, Ai’s vision was obstructed by a black smoke as dark as the night itself.

Soon the whole surroundings were covered with dense black smoke and nothing could be seen through.

But of course, Ai didn't show any signs of faltering and without even trying to get out of that black smoke, took a stance with her long bow.

“I guess [Lux Blast] should be fine enough.”

As she pulled the worn out bowstring that looked like it might break any moment, light particles began gathering and soon formed into an arrow of light.

It seems she did not require an actual arrow to attack. Even with just her bow, she can easily use magic without any problems.

“Eiyah!”

The moment it was released from the bowstring, it burst to numerous beams and blocked the various black blades that were approaching from inside the black smoke.

White magic and Black magic clashed in mid air and light and darkness scattered each other.

“Halberds? Oh, the ones used by those light golems. How shrewd ~”(Ai)

The enemy's attack that were the black blades; Ai saw its true form just before they were smashed to pieces.

But, compared to the halberds used by actual heavy knights, it was a weapon of a much lower grade.

The fact that Kurono could remotely use weapons to attack after enchanting them with his black magic was already known by Ai who was watching his battle with Cyprus from the sidelines while eating the portable food.

Thus, she had quickly seen through the halberd attacks.

“Now then, next is—“

My turn to attack, is what she thought as she pulled her bowstring again but,

“Oops!?”(Ai)

She quickly jumped away from the place she was standing.

The very next instant, in the place where she was standing, a pillar of light fell down from the skies like a laser beam and created a giant explosion.

She guessed that probably this was the Extra Magic of that fairy known as Lily.

(“It’s as strong as an advanced level magic, not to mention that its activation speed is pretty fast as well. That could be dangerous.”)

As she jumped away to dodge the laser beam, she continued with her momentum to get out of the black smoke as well.

By using [Air Walker] martial art reflexively, Ai moved few meters of distance instantly but,

“—Kuronagi.”

The moment she came out of the black smoke, Kurono appeared while swinging his hatchet along with his martial art skill.

“Sooi!!”(Ai)

She jumped and rolled forward to dodge the martial art [Kuronagi] that was approaching while tracing a black shine.

She felt the hatchet with the ominous aura pass just above her head.

The moment she thought that she had avoided it, a slight pain ran through Ai’s back.

“iih!?”

She intuitively understood that she had been cut and soon after she also realized what had cut her.

In Kurono’s left hand was a silvery shining long sword.

“As expected of a mithril blade, it was able to cut through even that aura easily.”(kurono)

“Cyprus’ blade!? You really are extremely shrewd!!”(Ai)

It was a sword with a simple design but it was undoubtedly Cyprus’ [Mithril Sword].

The reason he’s using it just like that is probably because his affinity with white magic inside it is bad.

No, rather than that, Ai was thinking about something else altogether.

(“His movements are completely different from the time he was fighting against Cyprus—“)

He had a speed that could keep up with her who was even using [Air Walker]. And the fact that he was able to attack with a speed with which he could hurt even her, both were things which could not be seen in his previous battle.

But the moment Ai saw the witch holding her long staff, she got the answer to her question as well.

“I see, so you are under the effects of enhancement Boost!”(Ai)

“Correct!”(kurono)

The hatchet with the ominous black aura and the long sword with the white divine aura, these 2 combo of black and white attacked Ai who had nothing but a bow in her hands.

“—!?”

With a power that was already much above humans, he now also had the help of Fiona’s [Force Boost]. The sword attacks of such a Kurono were as sharp, fast and heavy as a master swordsman.

Physical attacks, magic attacks, an Apostle’s unique silver aura held a resistance against both of these, but the swords swung by Kurono were cutting through it as if it really were nothing but mist.

Realizing that her aura's defensive abilities were as good as nil now, Ai quickly began to take evasive actions under the consecutive storm like attacks with the help of her dynamic vision, body movement and intuition.

“ooo—“

Ai was completely on the defensive. A single cut ran through her soft cheek and fresh blood flowed out from the wound.

Ignoring the fact that her face, which is considered her life for a girl, had been injured, her face showed an expression of joy.

“Not bad! Much better than what I was expecteing!”(Ai)

The moment she said that, Ai became aware of the slight presence that had approached her from behind.

“Even though you say that, you're still holding back right?”(Lily)

As she turned back, Ai saw a beautiful girl leaping towards her.

While dishevelling her platinum blond hair and releasing an immense killing intent from her emerald eyes, Lily was there who was stretching her delicate glass like hands towards Ai.

(“Ah, this is bad.”)(Ai)

As shivers ran down her spine, Ai used all her might to evade that.

Just what level of heat did it possess; the cute little hand of the Fairy was shining with a green light.

Concentrating on getting away from that Fairy's attack that was most probably a sure-kill attack, she had no choice but to become unable to completely dodge Kurono's attack who was attacking from the front.

“Kuah!!”

As Ai sensed Lily's hand grazing her temporal region, a much stronger pain ran through her limbs.

Ai's clean and pure looking thighs and upper arm now had a gaping red wound due to Kurono's double attacks.

It was nowhere near a fatal wound but it certainly gave some damage. As she felt the clear pain from damage that she had not felt in a long time,

(“I guess I'll have to reevaluate them once again.”)(Ai)

She decided to acknowledge the strength of this party as one level above of what she had originally expected.

“—[Lux Kris Sagita].”

The moment she drew her bow in a matter of seconds, 2 arrows of light were nocked on the bow.

What was released was the intermediate level light attack magic. Both the arrows certainly captured both Kurono and Lily who were in different directions and approached them while changing their trajectories in mid air.

Kurono was light weight as well as possessed a [mithril sword] that had high resistance towards light magic and Lily originally had an extremely strong light magic [Oracle Field] so they were both able to defend against the light arrows fired by Ai.

In front of them, the two arrows flashed as they were broken.

In the time those two were blocked by that light, Ai had already moved ten meters above the highway to create a distance between them.

“Wow that really was good. It's been a really long time since I was cornered like this by just three people.”(Ai)

Even while blood flowed from her wounds, Ai spoke happily without even trying to use any healing magic.

Without really showing any surprise towards her, the three of them remained cautiously in their stances.

“I guess I’ll need to get rid of another seal or I won’t be able to face you guys properly—“

Ai stretched her free right hand, that wasn’t holding the bow, towards the hairband on her twintails.

Her hair weren’t held up by gum or strings but was tied up with a silver ring.

It was of the same material as the silver bracelet that she had been wearing just a while back. As she touched it lightly, Ai chanted.

“—Seal Unlock.”

And just like the silver bracelet the silver ring on her hair also— did not break and fall.

“.....huh?”

Ai made a surprised expression. This was not her usual playing around face but she was actually surprised right now.

(“Huh, what’s going on, why isn’t it breaking off? Did it fail?”)

She poked at her hairband with her finger tips but there was no response. It was as if it had become just a normal silver accessory.

But that’s impossible. These items were seals meant to seal her infinite white magical energy provided by God. It was a necessary ‘restraint’ for Ai who had been acting as a normal adventurer.

“Seal unlock! Seal Unlock!!”

The seal should have been removed with just those words but the hairbands were really not responding at all.

(“nonono, how can it fail with such a timing—no, if it was broken then the seal should have been automatically removed. But to not respond to the keywords even then...”)

Ai who knew the structure of the ring quickly thought of one possible probability.

“—[Mind Jammer]!?!“

And the enemy clearly had a member in their party who was able to use such a skill.

The Fairy Lily. She had used her Mind Jammer to destroy the network between the experimental squad and had made annihilating them very easy.

(“But, but this and that need two different types of Jammer. To be able to pinpoint the sealing item so accurately, just how—“)

She thought about the source, naturally she should be able to find out the answer like that.

But still, The enemy wasn't merciful and gentle enough to give her such time. After all, even if this was half play for Ai, for them it was battle for their lives.

“—Anchor Hand!”

It was exactly the same form that he had used against Cyrus. The 4 jet black big tentacles created by Kurono rushed towards Ai like surging waves.

“Uwaa—“

In a panic, she pulled her bowstring to counter it.

Under the effects of the seal, she could only use [Lux Sagita] that could be fired instantaneously but,

“Black Shield!”

There was no way a few low level magic attacks could stop Kurono's advance who was also using defensive magic.

“Mouu, wait a sec—“

If she couldn't stop then she had no choice but to run and create some distance between them.

Ai, who was still under the effects of [Air walker], tried to quickly move away from there but,

“How foolish. Do you really think we’d let you run away?”(lily)

Lily who had appeared behind Ai out of nowhere came to stop her.

Lily’s balls of light blocked all paths of evading Kurono’s attack.

(“Oh crap, there’s no way to run—“)(Ai)

She thought of rushing through it but soon decided otherwise. In her current situation, the damage she would take from Lily’s balls of light filled with magical energy and killing intent would be too high to bear.

As a result, Ai pulled her bowstrings now that her escape route was blocked and had no choice but to aim towards Kurono who was coming at her with 4 tentacles growing out of him.

The shield that had withstood countless arrows of light had already disappeared so she fired to atleast stop him somewhat if it hit his body directly but,

“He’s dodging even from this range!?!?”

Whether he had used intuition or maybe he had simply seen through it, Kurono fell down on all four limbs like an animal to dodge as the arrows of light flew above him.

“Got you!”(kurono)

The weirdly moving 4 tentacles quickly restrained Ai who had lost all ways to evade or counter back.

“Aaah!?!?”

The distance between both was 4m. Ai who had been caught by the 4 tentacles growing out of Kurono’s shoulder and back, obviously struggled and moved around to free herself but,

(“Uwaah, this tentacle, its dangerously dense enough to not be

stopped by just by the magical energy of my aura!”)

Ai, who was in a sealed state, had no way of getting away from those stiff and strong tentacles that had been created by Kurono with a lot of black magical energy.

“Oracle Field – Max power!!”

Behind Ai, Lily’s voice could be heard. And the oracle field that had been deployed was,

“Now—“(kurono)

Completely covered Kurono’s body inside the sphere.

She was caught and the enemy had deployed a defensive magic around him. Considering the situation, Ai could guess the conclusion of this.

And that her answer was right was proven the moment she looked above.

“—Do it! Fiona!!”(kurono)

Above Ai, a giant shining golden fireball of around 5m in diameter had appeared.

“[Golden Sun- Aur Soleil]”

“Eh, wait—“(Ai)

The sun that could kill an Apostle fell from the sky.

# Chapter 145 – Element Master Vs The 8th Apostle (2)

“Now then, we need to think of a way to defeat that ridiculous Apostle in this one hour. Got any ideas?”

I said that pretty much irresponsibly but,

“Yes, there is just one way.”

Unexpectedly, a proposal that I thought was impossible was given.

It was Fiona who raised her hand to give the proposal.

“Really?”(kurono)

“It’s not a sure-fire method and there are a lot of prerequisites as well.”(kurono)

“Tell us.”(kurono)

Honestly speaking, I couldn’t think of anything else other than fighting her head on. So if there actually was a different plan, I would definitely hear it.

I urged Fiona to continue while laying my hopes on her.

“Among the Apostles, there are items that can seal their magical power so that they can hide their identities apparently. The 8th Apostle Ai is the missing Apostle that I had told you about back then.”

Oh right, she had told me something like that as well. I thought that they must have hidden themselves to do some reforms etc. but to think that it was that girl.

“But, you’re pretty knowledgeable about them. Aren’t such things supposed to be secrets?”(kurono)

“The 8th Apostle is famous to move around incognito all over the

Republic. But due to that, there is no info regarding her abilities or powers at all.”(Fiona)

I see, so she’s quite popular unexpectedly.

“Since she’s a person who has been hiding themselves, there is a large possibility that they would be using a magical energy sealing item, is it?”(kurono)

“Exactly. And if she is using magic items that seal magical energy, then we should be able to interfere with it and stop her from unsealing her powers.”(Fiona)

“I see, the three of us together could defeat a weakened Apostle but \_\_\_\_\_”

The problem was whether Ai was actually using such an item or not.

I fought Sariel twice but I never confirmed the presence of such an item.

And even if Ai did have one, then the problem would be exactly how are we supposed to interfere with it.

At least, it’s impossible for me who can only use black magic and is absolutely illiterate regarding how magic actually works in this different world.

“Say Fiona.”(lily)

As I was thinking about it, Lily spoke beside me.

She had returned back to her child form but I guess she kept her adult consciousness considering the way she is talking.

“Are there a lot of types of such sealing magic items in the republic?”(lily)

“No, there are not much variations of such items that can continuously seal a person’s magical energy. They are extremely costly as well and not to mention the church has restricted them so

they are kind of a taboo item.”(Fiona)

“I see. Then the sealing item on that Apostle is—“

As Lily activated her Dimension magic as a small magic circle of light appeared, a white ring that I recognised appeared.

“—Then there’s a high chance it is similar to this one, right?”(lily)

“Wha, that’s!”(kurono)

As Lily slightly traced her small fingertips around the ring, 7 needles jumped out with a shrill sound.

“Yes, it’s an [Angel Ring] attached to those experimental subjects.”(lily)

As she traced her fingers around the ring again, the needles went back inside the ring.

“.....”

Honestly speaking, this item which has a ridiculous name like [Angel Ring] has already become a annoying symbol of restraint and confinement for me.

I feel bad just by seeing it.

But, there must be some meaning behind the fact that Lily has it right now.

“If it has the same structure as this ring, you think you can easily interfere with it?”(kurono)

It seems the [Angel Ring] also has a magic sealing feature in it.

When I had this thing on me, no, it was probably just not used on me. Although I myself have no experience of having my magic sealed, it was definitely used by Cyprus to bring those experimental bodies along with him here.

“Exactly, although I’ll need to use a completely different type of

[Mind Jammer] than the one I used against those experiments, but I think I can do it.”(Lily)

“Well if it’s Lily-san, I think she can do it.”(Fiona)

So it seems using the sealing strategy is actually possible.

“But the main problem is still whether she actually has such a sealing object or not. It’s obvious that she’d hold back while fighting against us but that doesn’t really require a sealing item to do so.”(kurono)

“That’s true. Also, if we are going to interfere directly with the sealing item, we need to where exactly it is located as well.”(Fiona)

Just as Fiona said, to obstruct the experiments, it was fine by just using [Mind Jammer] in the surrounding space but in this case, there was a need to pinpoint the sealing item before using the jammer.

The former worked like an EMP in our original world which obstructed radio and other electrical devices. The latter was more like hacking a PC through the internet.

“Either case is not a problem. I’ll find that out with my Telepathy.”(lily)

“You can do that? An Apostle might be able to defend against telepathy you know?”(kurono)

I’m not really sure how telepathy works exactly since I can’t use it myself.

But still, I know that telepathy isn’t omnipotent. Magics like [Mind Protect], or attacking back with [Counter] or [Reflect] also exist to face against it.

“It’ll be fine. Sariel’s mind was rigid and ‘frozen’ enough that there was no gap to peek through but this one’s quite lax. I’ll be able to read the outer thoughts without any problems.”(lily)

It seems there would be no problem then. Or rather, Lily actually

used telepathy on Sariel as well?

Maybe I should ask more about this later in detail.....

“Alright, then let’s go with this strategy. I’ll ask just in case but do we have any way of dealing with her in case a sealing item did not exist at all?”(kurono)

“In such a case, let’s just work hard and give it our all together.”(Fiona)

“Lily’ll work hard as well!”(lily)

“Got it. In case it doesn’t work, let’s just go with a full on frontal attack. Also Lily, you won’t fool even if you act like your child form.”(kurono)

Lily averted her gaze as she blushed slightly. Ah, she’s really cute.

No, this isn’t the time to be admiring Lily. I must think about the current strategy right now.

“Even in a sealed state, our opponent is still an Apostle. It’ll be normal for her to have magical energy better than a first class magician and she can probably use the same level of magics as well. Even if our plan goes well, it won’t be easy enough that we’ll get out of this unscathed.”(Fiona)

“I guess that’s true. In case the fight was dragged on too much, she might find a way to release her seal as well. If possible, as fast as possible.....let’s aim for the timing when she’d be panicking after finding that she can’t remove her seal—“(kurono)

.

.

.

And, our strategy worked just as planned.

As expected, Ai fought while holding back against us at first. And as

for finding out whether she had a sealing item or not,

“Even though you say that, you’re still holding back right?”(Lily)

Lily had only grazed against her head but her hand had definitely touched it. And at that moment she became sure of it.

(“I found it. There are two sealing items. The silver hairbands.”)

When Lily had asked her whether she had been holding back against us, Ai had thought of those sealing items for just a moment.

It was clearly at a level which could be read by Lily.

With this, “Ai is using a sealing item.” The first condition had been cleared.

(“—It’s fine, it’s the same structure as the ring. I can use jammer on it!”)

And that cleared the second condition.

After coming this far, we only needed to move as planned.

Stopping Ai was my job. And delivering the final blow was Fiona’s job.

To use the [Golden Sun – Aur Soleil], Fiona didn’t take part in attacking actively and simply supported with enhancement magics.

Though, even her enhancements were showing incredible effects. I was extremely surprised when my blade actually hit an Apostle.

And as a result, Ai decided to release another level of her seals to fight against us.

And with this,

“.....Eh? Seal unlock! Seal Unlock!!”

As I expected, a clear fatal opening was created.

“—[Mind Jammer]!?!“

It seems she had already found out the reason behind it, but it's already too late.

“How foolish. Do you really think we'd let you run away?”(lily)

“Got you!”(kurono)

And, finally I restrained Ai with my [Anchor Hand].

“Now! Do it, Fiona!!”(kurono)

Now, this checkmate 8th Apostle!

Just as my body was covered by the Oracle field used by Lily, from the sky, I saw a giant fireball approaching.

“Eh, wait——“(Ai)

Ai opened her eyes wide with surprise but she still struggled to get out her restraints.

But, in her sealed state she wasn't able to bring out enough power to get out of my tentacles' grasp. She could only squirm and struggle around like a powerless girl as my tentacles refused to even budge.

That's good, just like that, in the next 5 seconds, [Golden Sun – Aur Soleil] will impact and turn everything to ashes.

Of course, I won't get out of this unhurt either. I'm actually scared whether I'd actually even survive that but I really don't want to go down along with her.

While knowing that my [Anchor Hand]’s binding ability will fall, I turned it into thinner wires and at the same time began to retreat away from Ai at max speed where the fireball was going to land.

The remaining time is around 3 seconds. I want to get atleast 50m away from the centre of the explosion. As expected, I wouldn't have a chance of surviving if I was only 4m away from her.

I ran and ran, without turning back, as fast as I could. I don't know

how much distance was I able to create but I didn't stop my legs wanting to take as many steps away from that as possible.

“—!?”

And, finally the golden shining second sun reached the earth, and exploded.

A blinding flash spread all over and even though I closed my eyes instantly, I could still feel the incredible flash even with my eyelids closed.

That wasn't all. As if that light was trying to burn my body whole, an extreme heat enveloped my body.

“Hot—!!”

Probably due to the impact and shockwaves, I was being blown away in the air. I felt the sky and the ground, and all directions rotating around and reversing around me.

Thanks to the full power Oracle Field used by Lily, I didn't feel the impact of crashing back on the earth.—but that was only what happened just a second ago.

I had been able to block the strongest impact and damage but the Oracle Field had already disappeared from it.

“GuaaaaahhhhH!!!

Heat and shockwaves ran through my whole body but they weren't fatal. I still had ways to defend myself.

Since it was decided that I'd be facing the [Golden Sun – Aur Soleil] at a close range, Fiona had give me a rare magic item for defensive use called [Protection of the Blue Flame – NanaBlast Amulet].

It's effect was to greatly reduce damage caused by flames. Fiona was able to use her [Aur Soleil] even at close range to barely survive.

But still, since I wasn't even 50m away from the centre of explosion,

it could barely protect my body from the immense heat passing through, no a normal person would not have been able to tolerate this level of heat.

“Aaaaah—“

The [NanaBlast Amulet] inside my chest pocket was releasing a deep blue light and was showing an incredible about of defensive ability.

But, this is bad, too dangerous, I don't think I'll be able to bare this any longer.

Even my robe [Baphomet's Embrace], that had protected me till now, caught fire.

It had already become damaged after my fight with Cyprus but due to the waves released by the [Aur Soleil], its ,magic has finally run out of strength.

While protecting my body till the very end from the heat, the robe began to lose colour from the cuff and started turning to ashes.

If the robe also disappeared, even if my body had been greatly enhanced by countless experiments, I don't think I'd be able to withstand this sweltering heat.

Basically, the moment my [Baphomet's Embrace] began to turn to ashes, my death was also being confirmed.

Shit! Please hold out, just a few more seconds, withstand it!! While bearing through the immense heat attacking my whole body I strongly prayed.

And finally, the Demon's Embrace left me——

# Chapter 146 – Element Master Vs The 8th Apostle (3)

I'm alive.

I didn't get any fatal wounds nor did any of my limbs get blown off. No physical defects either. I can move my body somewhat.

“Guh, uu.....”

Inside the dense cloud of black smoke, I stood back up by putting power in my creaking body.

Since the dust had yet to settle, my vision is still blocked but I can ascertain atleast my own looks.

Fuck. My [Baphomet's Embrace] has completely disappeared.

Right now I only have a black shirt with no enchantments whatsoever and my leather trousers. My outfit is no different from a normal villager right now.

In this one attack, my black robe took more damage that it could handle and turned to ashes.

“Thanks, for being with me till now.”

After founding it in that treasure box at Lily's hut, it was my partner that had been with me for the past 3 months so I decided to send it off with a word of gratitude.

Fulfilling its job as my defence till the very last moment, if I did not have my [Baphomet's Embrace], I would have died there.

“So.....how did it go?”

Although slightly burned, I stood back up to my feet and looked forward.

The cloud of dust began to disperse with the blowing winds and my

visibility became clearer.

I had been blown away quite a lot of distance due to the explosion's shock waves. Now then, what happened to the 8th Apostle Ai who was at the centre of that explosion——

“.....What the hell is that?”

As the black smoke finally settled, I could see the 100m crater that was a proof of the immense explosive force of that magic.

I was also inside it and there was nothing to block me from seeing directly towards the centre of that crater.

And, I definitely saw a lump of something black there.

“Is that a monster?”

As I went a little closer, that black lump, no, that black object that was burnt completely was apparently something like that of a lion.

Since it was in a crouching like position, I couldn't make out its actual size but it seems bigger than atleast 10m in size.

What the hell is that thing? What happened to Ai? Is that monster Ai herself?

As I considered various possibilities, I took out my [HaraRetsu] just in case and took a stance.

“Kurono! Are you alright!!?”(lily)

And from the outer side of the crater, Lily's shouting voice came towards me.

Since I can't hear Fiona, she must have already collapsed due to over use of magical energy.

“I'm fine and still alive!”(kurono)

Lily, who was still in her girl form, appeared. She seemed somewhat sooty, probably because she used her Oracle Field to protect me and

was unable to defend herself.

As Lily ran towards me, at that moment, I saw the mouth of that black monster slightly move.

“It’s still alive!?!?”

It was exactly meant as a normal question but,

“—yeah, that was really dangerous.”

I actually got an answer.

“If Tsumiki-chan hadn’t covered me, I would have really died.”

The mouth of the fallen monster suddenly opened up.

From behind those ferocious looking fangs, a single girl appeared.

“I was really surprised. This is the first time someone actually jammed my sealing item.”

With an amused smile, as if nothing major had happened, the 8th Apostle once again stood in front of me.

There were no wounds on her body from the flames. She was pretty much the same when we started.

The only change was that her twintails had now fallen to a normal straight hairstyle.

That means, her seals had been completely removed.

“Kuh, are you kidding.....”

The distance between us was around 10m, yet her dense magical energy’s presence was stabbing into my body.

All of her seals now removed, her silver aura was now much thicker and I could even feel some sort of invisible, indescribable pressure as well.

This bad. The fact that we weren’t able to take her down with

[Golden Sun – Aur Soleil] was already bad but now that we've made an Apostle go fully serious, it has become even worse.

“Run Kurono!”

Just as Lily's voice resounded, numerous balls of light passed by me and flew towards Ai.

I can't just wait and watch here dumbfounded. For the time being, I began to retreat backwards to take as much distance I could from her.

But the moment I took the first step, Ai took a stance with her worn out bow with a speed that could not be seen by human eyes.

“I won't let you run away. I'll end it with this single shot—“

The balls of light used by Lily approached Ai with high speed. In just the next second, they'll reach and explode.

But in that instant, Ai fired the arrow that had been formed who knows when.

“—[Lux Sagitta] enchant [Ether].”

The arrow fired was the same as the ones she had fired before, or so I thought but, the light around the arrow became blurred, no, it was as if the space around the arrow itself was getting distorted, and I couldn't see it properly.

The [Lux Sagitta] fired with a weird effect was fired, and at the same time her wooden bow also broke.

It was unable to bear the force of the arrow being fired, probably it was actually as worn out as it looked.

As I thought that, finally, the balls of light fired by Lily hit.

While raising huge flashes and clouds of dust, I confirmed Ai standing in the same pose in which she had fired the arrow.

Considering the strength of an Apostle, I doubt she had taken much

damage but right now, rather than that, I'm more worried about that arrow she had fired.

“Kuh, her aim is Lily!?”

The [Lux Sagitta] went around me and flew towards Lily who was behind me.

The arrow is blurry and I can't really see it properly but its speed itself isn't very high. I can clearly track it with my eyes.

“Such a slow attack—“(lily)

Lily fired several balls of light to intercept the arrow fired towards her.

A single arrow in itself was a very small target but Lily's attacks that possessed high tracking ability could definitely hit an object that flying directly straight towards her.

As balls of light hit the approaching object one by one, small flashes and explosions were created.

But,

“—No way! Even though it's just a low level magic!!”(lily)

[Lux Sagitta] which was supposed to be just a low level attack magic was continuing on its path without any deviation even in the face of Lily's attacks.

“Dodge it Lily! That attack is dangerous!!”(Kurono)

Ai hadn't fired a normal [Lux Sagitta], I certainly heard her enchant it with 'something' called [Ether].

“!?!?”

The moment Lily began to take evasive manoeuvres, as if realizing that, the light arrow began accelerating.

Furthermore, it even made a sharp turn to correct its trajectory

towards the direction where Lily flew.

“It has Auto tracking ability as well!?”

This speed, manoeuvring ability; evading was impossible.

The only method left to Lily was,

“Oracle Field Max Power!!”

To defend.

\*ZUDODODODOO!!\*

“Lily!!?”

An explosion that was impossible for a normal [Lux Sagitta] occurred.

With a bright flash and waves of destruction, I saw Lily’s small body being blown away.

No way, could it be that Lily was—no, calm down. She had all her limbs, and she didn’t seem to bleeding too much either.

Her [Oracle Field] might have been broken but the Ancient Velvet dress around her body should have protected her.

Lily, who had been blown away, crashed on the ground and finally stopped.

There were no responses from her, it could be that she had fainted from the shock.

“It’s not the time to be worrying about your Fairy-chan you know? My attack hasn’t ended yet.”

I soon realized the meaning behind Ai’s words as I looked above for a second.

“Wha—“

There, the [Lux Sagitta] that had attacked Lily was now coming

towards me while in its same blurred form.

So it didn't end with the explosion that took out Lily. It seems she really intends to end this in a 'single attack'."

"Fuck, Magic Bullet Arts!!"

Holding the baton in my left hand, I fired a storm of magic bullets to intercept that light arrow.

But, as expected there was no effect, and no matter how many bullets hit it, the arrow kept on flying towards me like a missile that had locked-on to its target.

While retreating with max speed, I kept on firing the magic bullets but the distance kept on getting smaller.

It was impossible to evade but can I even get out of this attack alive? It had broken through even Lily's [Oracle Field] easily, my defensive magic was—no, don't give up yet, I have no choice but to do it!!

"Ooooooooo, Black Shield!!"

Holding the baton in front, I deployed my shield with maximum solidity.

I waited for the impact of the approaching [Lux Sagitta] while bracing my legs and standing firm there.

\*GIYARIRIRI—\*

Raising a shrilling, uncanny sound, the point of the arrow was being stopped by my black shield.

There was an impact but it didn't explode and like a drill trying to punch open a hole in a wall, the arrow continued to dig into the black shield.

Soon, the arrow broke through the shield as if it was obvious and continued on its path.

The moment my baton [Black Ballista Replica], which was still held in my hand that I had raised in front, came into contact with the 'distortion' of the arrow, it was instantly pulverised and smashed to pieces till the grip portion.

I felt as if I saw each and every splinter of my broken baton fly off in slow motion.

The arrow approached, I had no way of blocking it. What was next was my face, to be exact, it approached towards my eye that gave me my vision to see things.

“Kuhh!!”

Whether it was a reflex or was it done consciously, in that small moment, my right hand moved.

In front of me and the arrow, a black wall, no, the black blade of [HaraRetsu] was put in between and it acted as my very last defence.

\*GIYARIRI—\*

The same sound I had heard just a second ago. The arrow kept on pushing on, even when blocked by the blade of the cursed weapon as if not allowing anything to block its path.

It started shaving off, first the coating of black magical energy on the blade. It didn't even last 0.2 seconds.

It continued, next was the blade that held the curse.

[HaraRestu] was a cursed weapon, that means it was also a magic weapon. The blade's hardness that possessed magical energy was so high that it was incomparable to normal steel.

But, even so, it,

\*BAGINN!!\*

Was unable to stop this arrow!

“\_\_\_\_”

The black blade that possessed the curse of both love and hate was pierced through by the arrow of light.

This time, finally, there was nothing left to me save me any longer.

It couldn't be stopped. There was simply no way of stopping it.

That's why, I could only watch, with this left eye of mine, as the arrow approached it and pierced through it.

\*DOZUU\*

“GAHAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!”

The light plunged into my left eye.

It completely pierced through my eyeball. It hurts, I feel intense pain, but—it's not something I can't tolerate! I haven't died yet!!

“Ah, Aaaa.....”

The arrow pierced straight into my left eye and stopped there.

Since I can still sense things, it probably didn't reach and pierce through my brain it seems.

But obviously, I have lost half of my vision.

With my right eye that was still functioning, I saw the arrow of light stabbing into my left eye.

I threw away the remains of the [Black ballista Replica] in my hand and grabbed the arrow.

The enchant that distorted the space around it had already disappeared. Also, even though it's made of light, I can definitely grab it like a normal object and there was no heat either.

Rather than [Lux Sagitta] it was more closer to those [Stakes – Sagitta] used by Sariel.

“Uu Ooooooohh!!”

Shaking off the slight hesitation in me, I pulled out the arrow.

Inside my left eye, there was a sensation of something grinding and being torn and a sensation of my eye socket becoming slightly expanding instantly. Neither of them were things I wanted to feel ever again.

“Guuoo.....oo.....”

I pulled out the light arrow along with the eyeball that it had pierced into.

“Haa.....haa.....”

I didn't really feel like seeing my own eyeball stuck on the arrow so I quickly threw it away.

I unconsciously filled the eye socket that had become empty with my jelly-like black magical energy [Flesh Compensation] and pressed it together to make it compensate for the missing eyeball.

That's just simple flesh though, it was only meant to close the wound. Just like putting a glass ball inside there, it won't give me my sight back.

“Haa.....”

But what I need to think about right now is not my lost left eye but the enemy that's still standing in front of me, Ai.

With just my right eye, I glared at Ai who had come right in front of me who knows when.

“Sorry, I became a bit too serious there.”(Ai)

Sticking out her small tongue slightly, Ai gave a somewhat embarrassed expression, like a child whose prank had been found out by someone.

At this distance, my [Hararetsu] should reach her which hasn't

broken yet though it does have a hole from the arrow.

But, I can't move. My right hand that was holding the hatchet didn't move at all.

I haven't gone mad. Even at such a distance, there is no timing, no opening to attack at all.

Shit! Move! I don't mind even if I take her down with me. I'll attack!

Lily has fainted, Fiona is out of magical energy. I am the only one who can still fight!

"Don't glare at me like that. This battle was Devil-san, no Kurono-kun and the other's victory." (ai)

"What are you planning?....."

"Nothing at all. My bow broke after all."

Putting both of her hands in the front she fluttered her palms. Her actions were really comical like a child.

"I never said that we'll continue this battle till either one of us died. Kurono-kun and the others don't want to die for no reason either right? Or rather, I was saved by Tsumiki-chan as well so I technically lost for breaking the rules as well, or something like that?"

I could only blink my eyes and breathe right now.

I was unable to even agree or even nod to her words.

"fufufu, I really thought I'd die in today's battle. Tsumiki-chan also died. It was quite Hard Mode battle but I had fun." (ai)

As if thanking me, Ai clapped my shoulder.

I reflexively shook her hand off.

"Nn mouu, don't be so angry! But I'll forgive you, you three worked

really hard after all, that's why—“(ai)

That moment, a silver aura gushed out of Ai mixed with extreme killing intent.

“—Don't you dare lay a hand on them Misa.”(ai)

That killing intent was not towards me, but towards someone else, right, I realized it now that someone else was standing right behind me.

“It looked like you were having a tough battle so I came to help you, you know?”

“Wh, who is it?.....”(kurono)

As I turned to look back, a woman I had never seen was standing there.

“11th Apostle Misa, the great me shall kill you so be grateful alright!?”

Another new Apostle was standing there.

# Chapter 147 – Pitiful Winners

(PoV is 3rd person)

The girl with wavy light pink hair,

“11th Apostle Misa, the great me shall kill you so be grateful alright!?”

Said that to Kurono with a face brimming with confidence.

“The 11th Apostle, you say.....”

An already impossible situation had occurred when an Apostle had arrived but now another one of those Apostles had come here. He couldn't keep up with the situation.

But, without minding such a Kurono, the 2 Apostles began to talk.

“I’m telling you not to lay a hand on them, didn’t I? Just go back obediently Misa.”(ai)

“Haa? Are you serious? Why do I have to let some demons get away alive? As an Apostle, if you see them you’re supposed to deal with them at that very instant right?”(misa)

“My God didn’t say anything like that to me.”

Killing intent and magical energy flew from both sides suddenly.

It was an explosive situation. Kurono who knew he had no way of facing a fully serious Apostle could simply shut his mouth and stand there while holding his breath.

“Well fine. I’ll give you face since you’re my senpai here.”(misa)

After a few seconds of time, Misa pulled back and the situation calmed down.

“So, why is Misa here?”(Ai)

“nfufu, there were people who wanted to borrow my power you see. Not Sariel but me. They pleaded me to help me no matter what!”(misa)

Fun, Misa puffed her chest with pride. Her chest was much bigger in volume than Sariel’s and were pretty good.

“Even pigs can flatter—no, so, what’s that request? Did you finish it already?”(ai)

“Well it was supposed to be finished after I killed that uncivilised looking guy and those two girls lying around here and there but since Ai senpai said to not do so no matter what, I’ll stop here.”(misa)

“fun, so your job was—“(ai)

“Yup, to annihilate all demons who were crossing this road!”(misa)

As Ai gave a pretty weak reaction since she expected that, Kurono froze the moment he heard that.

(“She, just what did she say just now? Annihilate? The demons who were crossing through this road?.....That means.....”)

“Say, that man over there seems to be glaring at me right now —“(misa)

In Kurono’s line of sight, Misa’s figure had already disappeared, no, he only felt that it had disappeared.

It was not something like teleportation, she had simply moved too fast. It was just a simple movement.

And, Misa who had moved way beyond Kurono’s perception,

“Gohaah!?!“

Smashed her hard heel into his abdomen.

As Misa’s kick smashed deep into him, Kurono’s body flew in the air.

“He’s irritating me, should I kill him after all?”(misa)

He finally fell face fist to the ground.

Since he was lying face down he could only see the ground but he knew that currently a blade was being pushed against his neck.

“I just said that’s not allowed. Now c’mom, quickly put away your armament scriptures already.”(Ai)

“Tche, killjoy!”

The sensation of the blade disappeared from his neck.

In its place, Misa’s heel pushed stabbed into Kurono’s back.

Although he was simply being casually trampled upon, the attack from an Apostle’s power and a mithril heel was similar to having a hammer being smashed into him.

“Gah.....ha.....”

Holding on to his consciousness that felt like it’d fly away beyond the horizons, Kurono held onto his awareness.

“Or rather, won’t it be bad if you move around so freely here? Pandora is under Sariel-chan’s control. They won’t allow the intervention of another Apostle right?”(Ai)

“You really are talking as this doesn’t concern you at all.”(misa)

“I’ll be fine. That geezer Pope, that Hero wannabe second Apostle as well as God will completely forgive me ‘kay?”(Ai)

“I am definitely not convinced with that!!”(misa)

“Yeah yeah, I’ll hear your complains if I feel like it later so let’s return for now.”(Ai)

Misa didn’t try to hide her dissatisfied expression but she complied with Ai’s words.

“I guess that’s true. If I am not allowed to kill these ones, then

there's no reason to stay here any longer."(misa)

As Misa snapped her fingers, a white magic circle appeared in an instant with just that.

Kurono who was still lying down couldn't see that but Ai knew what effect that magic circle possessed in a single glance.

"A Griffon familiar servant!"(Ai)

As Ai's sparkled, in front of her a monster with the upper body of an Eagle and lower body of a lion was summoned.

Its size was obviously much bigger than both normal eagles or lions.

The 10m large Griffon certainly gave off a monster like ferocity but its pure white feathers and fur also gave it a sublime divine-like presence as well.

It was truly befitting for a mount of an Apostle that had been granted the Divine Protection of their God.

"So nice! I'll also make my next Tsumiki-chan a Griffon rather than a Chimaera. Oof!"(Ai)

"Right, it's nice right, my Griffon—wait, don't climb on it on your own!?(misa)

Disregarding the summoner Misa, she tried to hold down Ai who was trying to climb on top of it.

"eeeh, it's fine if you let me ride it, or rather let me ride it! It's fine even if its just till Alsace village."(Ai)

"Where the heck is this Alsace Village.....fine, Ai-senpai will sit behind me! Come on, let go of the reins already!"(misa)

The two girls squabbled over the luxurious stirrup of the Griffon, they really seemed to be having fun but,

("What the fuck, is this.....Don't fucking mess with me.....")

It had already become a disgusting memory for him.

“Wa, wait.....8th Apostle Ai.”

Putting his strength, Kurono raised his body.

He shouted towards Ai who seemed like she'd fly away any moment in this evening sky.

“What happened to the others! Weren't you going to let them run away!!”

Ai showed a quite surprised expression towards Kurono who had stood up once again but she quickly answered with an impish smile.

“ahahaha, sorry, it seems, they ended up dying. Moth those refugee demons as well as those adventurers, right?”(ai)

As Ai struck Misa's shoulder, she opened her mouth in an irritated fashion.

“Ah, un, one week ago some villager like demons had come in hordes so I did exterminate them all. Also, those ones who were going by those carriages were quite tenacious. I really got irritated, seriously.”(misa)

“Well, that's how it is so too bad even though you fought so hard. Work harder next time as well!”(Ai)

It was a cruel truth pushed upon Kurono.

He couldn't reject it as a joke. After all, he knew the strength of the Apostles.

The 6 days he had bought after trying and fighting so hard against the Crusaders; even though the refugees were already dead when they were fighting——

“.....wha.”

And, even the adventurers he had fought with, while he had been going along with this ridiculous game of this Apostle was killed by

another ridiculous Apostle.

“No, way.....”

Power left Kurono’s body.

The cursed hatchet that he gripped so tightly had already fallen to the ground.

“If we were to meet again, I’ll face you again. I won’t lose next time though! Now then Kurono-kun Bye bye!”(ai)

Till the very end, leaving behind nonchalant words, the 2 Apostles finally left.

The giant white Griffon disappeared into the evening red sky.

The only one left was the pitifully victor of the battle against the 8th Apostle Ai.

“No way.....it’s a lie, right?”

# Chapter 148 – Alsace Village Occupied

At the Alsace Village HQ, in one of the rooms of the building that was once the Village Head's house, the 2 Apostles, Norz, and the direct subordinate of the 8th Apostle, Sister Sylvia were currently gathered.

In front of the 2 heavenly Apostles , Norz was bowing his head but his expression was rotten as if he had just swallowed an insect.

“.....Thank you very much for your help in the annihilation of the demons, 11th Apostle Lord Misa.”(norz)

But only the words of gratitude were allowed to leave his mouth.

Even if they

“Like I said, I'm going back already!”(misa)

“Isn't it fine! They prepared even meals for us specially. Come and eat with us ~”(Ai)

Were chattering among themselves and not listening to anything Norz was saying.

“No way. I'm not going to eat something prepared by this shabby occupation army in this remote region.”(misa)

“Eh, bread and soup is really delicious though? Much better than portable food provisions!”(Ai)

“Your eating habits are too poor for an Apostle! We are special existences chosen by God, that's why we need to live more specially than normal people!”(misa)

“You're talking like a noble.”(Ai)

“We ARE nobles! The title of 'Lord' isn't just for show!!”(misa)

“I didn’t really get a court rank—“(Ai)

As their talks continued endlessly, Norz was left to wait in stiffened state.

He glanced towards Sylvia who was also waiting beside him, to check her appearance but,

“.....”

With a gentle smile, she was listening attentively to the conversation between her master and Misa.

It seems Sylvia had no intention to stop their useless conversation either.

As a result, after almost 30mins had passed, their chatting finally ended as Misa left after refusing Ai’s invitation to join her for the meal.

“—then, you mean to say that you intentionally let that ‘Devil’ run away alive?”(norz)

Finally, Norz was able to know the details of the situation.

“Yup, also the fairy Lily-chan and the witch Fiona-chan as well.”(Ai)

“I..see.....”(Norz)

After the fateful incident at Irz, and finally, the Devil Kurono who had made victim of a lot of soldiers of their whole squad was left alive, was a fact to which Norz simply could not readily agree to but he simply could not yell at an Apostle.

Norz who had served in the army for a very long time, was perfectly aware not to be foolish enough to reject their superior’s instructions.

“nfufu, sorry Sylvia –chan, for leaving you alone for such a long time.”(Ai)

“No, it’s fine Master, as long as you return like this.....”(Sylvia)

Even though Misa had finally left, now Ai and Sylvia had started flirting around with each other but even then, Norz had no authority to complain.

Why two women were.....it was stupid to even think about it. Looking at Ai who was playing around with Sylvia with a manner of hands that would put even the most perverted of geezers to shame, he realized that she swung that way from the very start.

“I humble apologise but can you please let me confirm some more of the details?”(norz)

Choosing the timing, just when those two ended their passionate actual lover-like kiss, he asked again.

“Nn? There was still something left?”(Ai)

“It was Bishop Gregorius that deployed 11th Apostle Misa, is that correct?”(norz)

“Yup, since she said ‘grego-somethin’, there’s only old man Gregorius among those in Pandora that matches that description.”(ai)

Ai answered while groping Sylvia’s bountiful chest. Ignoring that action altogether, Norz confirmed his thoughts in his mind.

“I see, so by reinforcements, Bishop Gregorius meant an Apostle.....”(norz)

As he muttered that,

“Nn, is that it, is that the place!”(ai)

“Ah, please stop Master, anymore than this is.....”(Sylvia)

He realized that he could not get any more info from Ai whose dumbness was at max power.

There were famous rumours in the streets of the Republic that the

8th Apostle went around wandering all over the place while defeating monsters and punishing corrupt merchants and government officials here and there. Of course, Norz was also aware of that.

Even though she was never in Elysion, the fact that she knows about every high ranking clergyman dispatched to Pandora means that many other subordinates like Sylvia have been dispatched at every place.

Subordinates like Sylvia who wore a nun's habit over their voluptuous bodies.

Seriously, it was outrageous.

"Well, Misa was the one who did it, most of the demons who ran away must have been killed surely. With this the occupation army's mission is also over, right?"(Ai)

".....yes."(norz)

As Norz showed a somewhat dissatisfied expression, Ai gave a slight warning while licking Sylvia's white nape of the neck.

"You're not allowed to chase after Kurono-kun, 'kay?"(Ai)

"I..Understand."(norz)

As Ai declared that Kurono and the other two would probably reach the neighbouring Spada much easily if they were not 'hindered' any further, Norz only became more and more dissatisfied.

But since he could never speak angrily to her, and he had heard everything he wanted to, Norz decided to take his leave as fast as possible from here.

"8th Apostle Ai-sama, thank you for your cooperation. Please leave the rest to us."(norz)

"Nn, oh right, I need to return the commanding authority back as well. I'll leave tomorrow morning again so after that old man, you'll be the in-charge again."(Ai)

“Very well.”(norz)

Indicating that there is nothing else to talk about, Ai stood up from her seat.

Thinking that tonight she could have fun, Ai began to leave the room while linking arms with Sylvia tightly but stopped once again before the door and turned back.

“Oh right right, you’ll probably be scolded by the ‘higher ups’ for losing so many men in capturing just a small village but just tell them that you were facing a guy that could defeat even the 8th Apostle, alright? Well, I doubt they’ll believe you though. See ya!”(Ai)

And this time finally, she left the room.

Norz who alone was left in the room stood up as well and drew his mace from his waist.

“Bullshit!!”

He swung it down directly on the seat on which the Apostle was sitting just a few seconds ago.

In any case, on the 6th of Hatsubi, with the occupation of Alsace village, the Crusaders had finally taken control over all of Daedalus territory.

# Chapter 149 – The Survivors

The sun had already disappeared along the ridgelines of Galahad Mountain Range, and night had come upon.

Normally there wouldn't be anyone who would walk in the dark roads here, but right now there were 3 shadows walking silently while a faint light was shining around them.

Kurono had been walking with his eyes cast down, Lily and Fiona walking behind couldn't find words to say to him.

The three consumed the last potion to replenish their stamina for walking, soon after replenishing, they had started walking.

Their destination was, the place where adventurers were attacked by 11th Apostle.

If Misa's words were truth, there should be traces of fight remaining on the road.

It hadn't been more than half day since the queue of carriages carrying adventurers ran away, leaving Kurono and others, it could be predicted, the place of attack was not too far.

And, Kurono couldn't help but confirm it.

(My feet, are getting heavy.....)

The Kurono right now had stopped thinking anything.

What happened to the adventurers, what happened to the refugees, what to do from now on, what will it become from now on—He had stopped thinking all this, just earnestly concentrated and moved forward.

Even so in the depths of his heart, faintly but surely the worst premonition\s prediction, tried to torment his heart.

Hence Kurono walked, unless he confirmed the truth with his own eyes he couldn't do anything else.

How much time would have passed since walking, it probably hadn't been that long, finally on the road which felt like an eternity long to Kurono, he saw the end of it, the answer.

“.....!?”

Upon being shined by Lily's light ball instead of flame, a quadrilateral in far distance reflected in Kurono's eyes.

To Kurono with eyes enhanced like that of an nocturnal animal, he could not make any mistake when seeing in the dark.

The moment he recognised the square/rectangular something, Kurono ran up to it.

“Ah, Kurono!”

“Kurono-san——”

He couldn't listen their voices, he couldn't remain still without confirming, even if, the worst conclusion was waiting for him.

“Ah, Aaah.....”

That was without a doubt the wreckages of the carriages.

Without a mistake, it was the carriage they had created in a hurry for escaping, not even painted a carriage made of rough wood was broken in many parts.

The rear part was reflecting in Kurono's eyes, the front part was in wrecks, as though an iron ball had hit it.

“Th-This is.....”

In front of it, toppled in the same way, broken in several places, many wreckages of carriage were spread out.

And, from the other side of still dark road, came the smell of blood which he had gotten accustomed to in past few days.

The thing that came in Kurono's mind, was neither the faces of

reliable adventurers, neither the faces of hateful Crusaders, nor the faces of absurd apostles.

It was the scene of Village of Irz burning, just that came up in his mind.

That hell, where everything was too late, he couldn't save anyone.

Right now, there were neither burned houses or families, neither the friends who were crucified.

But here was, the scenery of despair, just like of the now destroyed Village of Irz.

“This is.....too much.....”

Kurono walked with unsteady feet, but finally his will power exhausted and his knees gave up on that spot.

In front of his eyes, inside the craters of various sizes, the mowed down trees, the traces of the violent fight were spread out.

Which sort of heroic battle started here, there was no way of understanding it now, but the thing he knew was,

“Everyone.....is dead.....”

the fact, adventurers were annihilated cruelly.

He saw corpses of people he knew, scattered here and there.

In one conspicuously big crater, one had been sewn inside the ground by the large fang sword struck in his chest, the person with big frame was Vulcan.

『Fang Blade』 which had pierced through the heart directly, was still being held on the hilt tightly by the right hand which had been cut off from elbow.

On the roadside was a black worn-out cloth lying down, if the wand modeled with skull was not lying besides it one couldn't make out it was Morzun.

Whether he had taken a lot damage, or whether crushed by something big, from tip of toe to the top of head every bone was pulverised in very small pieces, there was no more the face of skull, it was absolutely impossible to identify him.

The 3 corpses lying on the toppled down trees as though they were leaning, were without a doubt of the 3 sisters from 『3 Hunting Princesses』.

To a distant person it would look like three people were joining hands in an horizontal line, in truth their palms were pierced through by arrows, so their hands were forcibly joined together.

The three had their heads cut off cleanly, because the three had the same equipments and physique, He couldn't understand who was whom.

He didn't had any willpower to find the freshly severed head which could have been lying somewhere.

“What the heck.....don't fuck with me, just what is this.....why did this thing—”

The more he looked the more bodies, corpses, remains he saw, all blood-drenched, there was not even one with complete body, he could easily feel the evilness of killer, it was an Over-Kill.

But, even in those scattered and gory corpses, from the body features, clothes, equipments, he could make out who is whom, he was made to know it.

Though it hadn't been more than a month, but there was no way he would forget the people who ate and slept with him, fought with him on the battlefield.

That's why, he accepted their deaths without having any doubts.

It's a lie, It can't happen, It can't be true, any objection was meaningless.

Now only did Kurono knew the truth, that the 11th Apostle Misa, really 'annihilated all the demons passing this road'.

“We didn’t fight for something like this!!”

Along with screams the flowing tears, run along the cheeks and fall on the ground like a rain.

“Damn it! Fuck off! Once again I——”

Kurono crouched as though he were rejecting the reality spread around the place,

“——Once again I couldn’t protect anyone.....”

He couldn’t help but cry the tears of regret.

But even if he regretted, he couldn’t get the answer to what he should have done.

Let it be invasion of Crusaders, defensive battle of Alsace, surprise attack of experiments, attack of apostles, he and his friends all face against all them things with full devotion.

However, it all ended up as nothing, wasted effort, wasted fight, and, wasted death.

What had gone wrong, what shouldn’t they have done, what should had been done, can the end be reached without this disaster waiting for them?

The answer couldn’t come out, it never will.

Even if got hold of the answer, it would simply added to his regret list, it couldn’t help to change the reality in front of him.

Inside the mind of Kurono who had fallen in the circle of those thoughts, a flash ran through it.

That gave him the absolute simple and clear solution, to the answer which shouldn’t had gotten an answer.

“.....I was weak, huh”

That answer was,『Power』.

What if, he had the power to kill many thousands many millions of Crusaders?

What if, he had power to kill apostles?

“If I was more strong, had more power, nobody needed to die”

The moment he arrived at that answer, Kurono was tormented by the true regret.

He couldn't forgive himself for bringing a situation which couldn't be reversed, he recognised it as a sin which couldn't be repented for in his life.

No matter what sort of radical reason it was, to Kurono it was the only truth.

“I see, everyone died because of me”

The thing, occupying Kurono's heart was,

“Ha, Hahaha.....I see, I now understand, all of it, was my fault, I was wrong——”

Without a doubt 『Despair』

“Kurono!”

At that moment, a light came near Kurono.

The moment a rainbow-colored phosphorescence reflected in his right eye, a warm, soft, small thing jumped on Kurono's body.

“Kurono is not wrong! You tried hard! Really hard! Harder than anyone else!”

“.....Lily”

Clinging to Kurono's chest, having tears swelling up in the corner of her eyes, shouting positive words, was the small Lily.

“Kurono, you have protected me!

I am alive, you have protected me, I am alive!

That's why, you're not wrong!"

Though they were clumsy words, but, those words certainly insert a line of hope inside Kurono's heart filled with despair.

"Lily.....Thank you"

That light, was not the miracle to change the reality in front of him.

Kurono was very near to the kill himself by swinging the last weapon he had left, 『Cursed Grudge hatchet 「HaraRetsu」』

However, within Lily's words was the power to stop the foot of Kurono who was about to be engulfed in despair.

A little bit, calmness returned to him.

"I'm fine, that's why.....don't cry"

"Yea, Yeah! Lily, won't cry!"

Kurono hugged Lily tightly, who had sank her head on Kurono's chest, which only had a thin shirt now.

The small warmth he felt near his chest, gave Kurono back his calmness, and willpower to once again stand back up.

".....Let's search for survivors"

While holding Lily near his chest, Kurono stood back up.

Leaving all the sorrow, grief, regret, repentance for a later date, he started to move for completing what he had to do.

"Oi! Is there anyone alive!"

Facing the darkness spread out in the surrounding, he yelled out loud.

Anyone, even if 1 person, if there was any person alive, they have to save them.

It didn't even need thinking, the thing they had to do right now, was to search for survivors and rescue them.

“Oii! Oii! Anyone! Reply!!”

It's useless, no one can be alive after fighting an apostle—That thought, forcibly swelled up inside the corner of his mind.

If he just stood there the negative feelings will only return back, but, there was no time to stop, to be in despair, to be discouraged, saying that Kurono desperately tried to cheer himself up.

“Oo—i!!”

Kurono started walking to search for survivors, while holding Lily who was still grumbling 'I'm not crying'.

“ضوء شمعة تضيء ثلاثة” —『Torch』”

At that moment, the surroundings near Kurono suddenly lit up.

Upon looking, he saw many fireballs falling down while burning brightly from dozens of metres above in sky.

Like a flare, the space around the fireballs was illuminated.

“I thought it would be easy to search when bright.”

Fiona who appeared from behind like a shadow had, her favorite staff 『Ainz Broom』 held in her hands.

“It helps, Thank you”

Seeing Kurono smile, Fiona felt relieved without changing her expression.

Fiona with zero friends, didn't know the correct words to say at that time.

She left the decisions to Lily, thanks to that Kurono got back the willpower, finally she felt relieved because she could talk to him again.

“By the way, is there any magic for searching a person?”

Fiona was about to smile, but hearing Kurono’s words she returned her poker face, and replied to the question

“The bloodlust or magical power can be searched within a certain range”

“No, even I can do that, or perhaps I should say, a person with serious wounds or is on the verge of dying can’t emit a presence like that”

Even the amazed gaze of Kurono, was somewhat comfortable for Fiona.

She once again realizes that she was quite unstable upon seeing the Kurono’s previous state.

“I’m sorry, but I haven’t learnt any magic for searching feeble presences of magical power”

“I see, then what about a magic to increase the loudness of voice?”

“I haven’t learnt that too”

“Can’t be helped then, I can only search steadily now. Thank you for lighting the area.”

Thanks to that, a larger area of disaster could be seen, but Kurono was trying hard to not realize much.

“Ooi! If anyone is alive, reply please!”

And, the moment he yelled out,

SFX: Katan—(Rattle)

Certainly, a sound resounded

“Is anyone over there!?”

As though it were replying Kurono’s voice, this time even more clearer sound resounded.

That came from the wreckage of carriage, turned upside down.

The canopy had been completely destroyed by the weight of the carriage, but someone was within the small gap between the frame of carriage and ground, trying to come out from there.

After finding out the source of voice, Kurono dropped Lily as though he were throwing her and ran up to the broken carriage.

“Oi! Are you there!?”

While shouting, he lifted up the broken carriage by putting his hands in the gap between it and ground.

Kurono had superhuman strength due to remodelling enhancement, without even using support magic or enhancement martial skills, though he couldn't easily pick the whole wooden carriage, but he could incline it easily.

“Are you alright!?”

He thought to call out to Fiona for taking out the person, but before he had a chance to do that, the person pinned under the carriage crawled out on its own strength.

“.....Is it you, Onii-san?”

The person who came out was, The Sniping Alchemist, Simon.

Instead of his favorite sniper rifle 『Yatagarasu』, he held a dark red colored gem in his hands.

“Simon!? It's good, you are fine——”

From the shape of Simon, though his clothes were very dirty, but his hands and legs only had some traces of bruises or scars, there was no fatal injury on him.

Seeing there was no danger to life, Kurono felt relieved.

“.....It is not good”

He sat down on the ground, with face cast downwards. Kurono wasn't able to see clearly the expression of Simon thanks to his ashen colored hair.

But, that voice was certainly trembling.

“It is not at all good.....everyone is, everyone is dead, they were all killed by that person.”

“Simon.....it will be good if you don't think that right now”

The moment he said such words while crouching, Simon raised his head up.

In the same Emerald eyes like Lily, large drops of tears were swelling up.

“Susu died while protecting me! I can't do that! I can't help but think, that person, always, to me——”

As though it were a ruby, Simon hugged the red stone tightly. Kurono immediately understood the identity of the stone.

That was, the core of a slime.

It was the source of life of Susu, who was a rank 4 thief, and was the spotter of Simon.

“I-I couldn't do anything.....I was so afraid, of that person.....I only got protected till the end.....Uuuuuuuuuu!”

As if the barrier was broken, Simon starting crying heavily.

“I'm sorry.....I'm sorry, I couldn't protect anyone”

Kurono, tightly held the slender body of Simon.

Just like how Lily did it for him, some moments before.

“Kuuuu.....Why, Why must someone like me.....be alive.....”

“Dont say anymore! I'm really grateful that you are alive, really!”

“B, But.....”

“It’s okay, right now be happy that you survived, I’m really happy that you are fine, Simon.”

From then, Simon kept on crying silently while being hugged by Kurono.

Even Kurono who was cheering up Simon, didn’t had his heart completely healed, even while holding the small body, the negative feeling were spreading inside his heart.

“—Kurono”

At that moment, the sharp voice of Lily stopped the jumbled thought process, and returned him back to reality.

“What happened Lily?”

Lily’s appearance was still of a small child, but just from having his name called, Kurono understood her consciousness had changed to that of adult.

He won’t ask for what reason did she changed her consciousness.

He didn’t even need to think, because if she used 『Queen Beryl』’s power more than the time limit, then it meant the situation was bad that she couldn’t help but regain her consciousness.

“Look at that”

She was looking towards the Galahad Mountain Range in far distance, with grave eyes which couldn’t be seen in her child form.

Kurono released the body of Simon, stood besides Lily, and looked towards the same direction.

“That is—”

There was, queues of light torches spread here and there.

There wasn’t any other explanation other than. ‘someone’ lit the

torches and was walking the road in night in a queue.

“—Is it the, pursuit squad of Crusaders!?”

“But, if they came, then it will be from behind, right?”

Lily’s point was right.

Kurono immediately understood, that the Crusaders can never come from the direction of Galahad Mountain Range.

“So is it the queue of refugees? No, that is going the other way—”

“Err, Lily-san.....”

Before he knew it, Simon stood besides him after crying out to his heart’s extent.

“What?”

Seeing Lily’s sharp gaze, he was faltered a bit, but suddenly replied.

“Can you try using your light magic for seeing in far distance”

“That’s right, we have confirm what it is, by our own eyes.”

After completing the chant, a transparent lens formed in her hands, just like the one she had used when scout party was intercepted in Village of Irz.

Simon and Kurono look through the lens simultaneously, and start observing the group approaching from the other side of dark road.

“I can’t see it clearly.....”

Even through lens, maybe because of darkness, Simon couldn’t see anything other than darkness and the light of torches carried by group.

But, in the right eye os Kurono which worked in the dark, it was clearly reflected.

“—They don’t seem like either Crusaders or Villagers too”

Throught the lens, Kurono saw a armored-figure of a knight straddling on a horse.

It was completely different from the attire of Crusaders, it was a different army.

However, because there was no person with large build like that of beast person or golem, so everyone was of the size of human, but because it was made up of all humans the possibility of the army being of Crusaders cannot be rejected.

“Onii-san, can you see the crest on the flag?”

“crest? Hm.....Yeah, it is, I can see it”

“Tell me what design does it has!”

Squinting his eyes, Kurono observed the two flags held up by the knights.

He felt relieved seeing on both of them, Cross was not drawn.

And he realized that both flags had different crests drawn on them.

“On one flag, crown and sword are intersecting each other, on the other, a helmet, shield, and spear are drawn. Do you know it, Simon?”

“Yeah, without a doubt, it is the army of Spada.“

Just for a moment, a sigh of admiration leaked out, he recalled the fact he sent a messenger to Spada for reinforcements.

If they were coming in this situation, did it mean they were really reinforcements?

“No, wait, will Spada really try to save us?”

That line didn't seem like, it came from the guy who said to run to Spada, but in front of a completely armed army, that worry is only normal.

More than anything Spada was an enemy nation for Pandora, in the first place even if they accepted the refugees but for what reason, with an army in front he couldn't help but worry.

"It's alright, we can talk our way through that squad, ah, Onii-san, just to be sure, is the person walking in lead of that squad in more heavy equipments than others?"

"Nh.....Yeah, certainly, only one person is equipped with heavy equipments."

Even after using Lily's lens, he could only see the silhouette, not the details, but he could still make out the appearance of knight was different from others.

The knight walking in lead, was without a doubt the leader.

He was equipped with the trademark of a heavy knight, the halberd and tower shield.

Naturally, the heavy knight himself too was suitably tall, compared from the knights following him on both sides, his head was more taller.

Other knights were, equipped with a charge lance with short hilt and long bade, though their shields were large but compared to the toughness of Tower Shield, they were no where to be counted, their armor too seemed thin compared to the one of leader.

Kurono told everything he saw to Simon.

"Yeah, those guys are certainly, Spada's Army's Second Squad 『Tempest』, don't worry, they will rescue us."

To Simon making a relieved face, naturally he asked question.

"Do you know about armies of Spada?"

Upon saying that, Simon hesitated a little, but then talked honestly.

"Yeah, the heavy knight leading 『Tempest』 is my elder sister" [ET: One note for readers, pls don't get too elated that she would be in

his harem or not, because as you know this KnM is like Game of Thrones, if you get what I mean.]

He did say, because of obligation, but hearing all this Kurono couldn't help but keep his mouth hanging open with amazement.

"Ah err, it isn't like I was hiding, but there were some circumstances, I myself am not a soldier of Spada—A, Anyhow, It will be fine"

There were a lot of things to ask, but for the time being the 'help' from Spada came,

"I see, we will be saved....."

Kurono finally realized that long fight had reached it's end.

The long fight of Alsace came to an end, with only 4 survivors and utter defeat.

# Chapter 150 – The Crawling White Shadow

The Media Ruins, are located about 10 kilometres from capital city of Daedalus, it was a dungeon with a rank 4 difficulty level.

Media ruins which was a large underground space recently revealed a new area, but due to the invasion of Crusaders the activities of adventurers was stopped, and the area was still left untouched.

For about 1 month from the fall of capital city of Daedalus, adventurer guild completely stopped their activities.

And, of course, because it was being ruled by Crusaders who don't allow freedom to demons, it was right now too, no, the activities of adventurers of Daedalus has been prohibited for eternity.

Hence, near Media ruins which used to have some adventurers roaming around it, right now not even a single adventurer was near it.

But however, this place was crowded by many people, even more than the number of adventurers who used to work here.

They all are humans, wearing a set of clothes with cross symbol on the white cloth, they are without a doubt, Crusaders.

The majority of them, were paying attention to the new area of Media ruins.

Because, there was something they were looking for.

“Hmm so this, I'm sorry, though I know this is wonderful altar, but Ancient magic is out of my area of expertise——”

The moment Judas the chief executive of 『White Sacrament』, reached the 『Altar』 the goal, he heard this ear-sore-high-pitched-rapid-talking line.

Having a stern facial expression with eyes furrowed as always ,

Judas turned back to the owner of noisy voice.

“Hello Welcome, I, work as the commander of the army under direct supervision of Cardinal Mercedes, my name is Gregorius, Ah, though I look like this I am a bishop, Nufufu, were both same bishop, please don’t restrain yourself when with me, nice to meet you.”

The noisy man without a doubt was clad in a robe of bishop, with height of an average adult male, other than his really narrow eyes, there wasn’t particularly any special feature in his appearance.

Gregorius moved his hand forward acting familiarly asking for a handshake while his eyes were abnormally narrow, with face like a devious fox in some fairy tale, revealed a somewhat suspicious smile.

“Gregorius 『The Prophet』 huh.....what business do you have Mr. Bishop”

It was almost like he would continue on ignoring, but Judas without showing any hint of being offended, responded back to the handshake.

“No, No, 『The Prophet』 is such an embarrassing second name for me, well, even though I am naming myself as such though,ahaha!”

The two bishops after exchanging handshakes, stood side by side, and exchanged words.

“I asked, what business do you have here?”

“Well, I’m sorry for that, I’m quite a talker, and the talk gets derailed, many people tell me that, hurry up and let’s get to the main matter.”

“.....”

It seemed like Gregorius was not such a dumb person, who wouldn’t understand the pressure from Judas’s silence.

“There is not any deep meaning, just a normal introduction. I want

to get along with ‘everyone’ in Crusaders, and so I am giving my introductions to everyone person here and there, you are quite conspicuous—whoops, I mean that you’re mysterious, I couldn’t find the your home or contact address, so here I am to gave my introduction, please take no offence.”

“Then, you have already completed your goal, right?”

It was obvious he was saying him to return back quickly.

But maybe he did understood it or didn’t, Gregorius intensified his smile, and started talking to him.

“Well well, we have met after all, why don’t exchange information and present condition status?

Though I look like this I know a lot of things. I have gotten hold of information of various things happening in Daedalus, ah, this seems like praising myself, Yes”

“I don’t have any interest in that, you too won’t be interested in hearing things from an old man who is always secluded in research, right”

Though having a high position of bishop, Judas was still immersed in his research, he is born researcher, within the church, this matter is quite famous.

It was also said, Judas reached till the position of Bishop, for making a experiment laboratory for his research.

In other words, till the time he gets to do his own research without any disturbances, he won’t desire anything else, things like ‘wealth’ or ‘authority’ desired by other clergymen is of no use to him.

The information gotten from Judas would only be technical status information of his research, one wouldn’t get any information for gaining profits from it.

Judas had gotten a lot of good evaluation from foreign and home country, for creating the 7th Apostle Sariel.

However, even if he hid inside his place using his abilities, the position of Bishop itself was troublesome, more than anything the highest ranking person Pope has taken a liking to him, due to that most don't interfere with him and regarded him highly, even within church.

Of course, such fame wouldn't leave Gregorius's ears, but, he still tried to talk to Judas like a person forcibly inviting someone to a brothel.

“I certainly know, you are interfering with ‘our’ work, however \_\_\_\_\_”

In the frivolous narrow eyes, a slight sharp light was residing.

“—Everyone is currently doing the ‘demon hunting’, it can stir up an animosity towards you because of your actions, right?”

Judas slowly turned his face towards Gregorius.

The tall Judas looked upon Gregorius as if looking down on him.

The trained and tanned body, like that of a warrior fighting on frontlines was abnormal for a old aged researcher.

But, even under the immense pressure of a drawn out sword Gregorius didn't falter even a bit.

“It will be rude to ask you—why do you think so, right. You had 『Predicted』 my actions, right?”

“Well, in truth that is right, I didn't have any other leads, so it took time to find you. Just why are you able to move so easily, secretly. Is this the so-called old-man's wisdom, Nfufufu”

Judas secretly slipped his subordinates as clergymen or soldiers in the occupation squads, for capturing ‘experimental bodies’ for his research and was moving in secret himself too, except Pope nobody else knew about it.

“So, how were the demons of Pandora? Did they satisfy your needs?”

“We have captured enough for starting the first phase, the experiments will start just as planned.”

Judas replied honestly, now knowing there was no need to hide the matter.

“『Holy Soldier Project』 was it? No it really is more excellent than what I had imagined, if you get successful in ‘mass producing’ them, wouldn’t all the soldier of Crusaders be unemployed from later on?”

To the praise or mockery filled sentence, Judas only replied with “The results are as planned.”

He didn’t pay any attention to the bishop, who was either praising or abusing the research.

“Ah, now that I think about it, there is a squad which was destroyed, I have somewhat information on it? It happened in the occupation squad under my supervision, the name was something like Cyprus Mercenary Group, I think?”

He recalled the face of the only young man, Cyprus, who didn’t return from the mission of demon capturing, but Judas soon erased it into oblivion.

He didn’t have any use for a dead person, if a useful piece’s part was broken, it only needs to be replaced by a new one. Simple as that.

The demons captured by the squad under Cyprus were zero, the experimental subjects which came back alive were only half and the rest were annihilated.

But, taking the failures in account, just like he had said before, the demons for first phase had already been captured.

Hence, he didn’t have any interest in the sarcastic-talking of Gregorius, on the contrary he asked a question.

“Didn’t you too move an apostle. It is not the work of an apostle to kill even less than 1 million demons.”

“Well even I thought that, but I just can’t object the 『Prediction』 . It was good till the time of sending, but when she returned she was really angry and took more amount of money as the reward, my bonus went down the drain, just like that. Hahaha”

While scratching his dull blond hair, Gregorius talked about the tyranny of 11th Apostle Misa in a humorous way.

“They have gained even more ‘DP’ than you, just because you can access the 『Divine Will Record』 , it doesn’t mean you can easily control the Apostles”

“.....Yeah, you’re right. I’ll keep that in mind.”

Judas sensed the the presence of Gregorius getting sharp for an instant.

It might be the unrest or vigilance of getting his 『Prediction』 rightly, whatever it maybe, both parties didn’t had any intention of accompanying each other.

“I would like you to not misunderstand, I don’t have any intention of either interfering or opposing you and your work.

Whenever you will try to do something new ‘in our Daedalus’, please just pass it through our ears, it will be convenient for you too.

Though we have different intentions, but it doesn’t change the fact we all are working for god. Having an harmonious collaborative relationship is what I, no, even god might be desiring it.”

“.....I’ll remember it”

saying ‘Thank you’, Gregorius respectfully bowed, but Judas was no more looking at him.

His eyes were staring at the, ancient altar in front of him.

What sort of magic apparatus it was, just like Gregorius said a non-expert in this area wouldn’t ever understand.

But, Judas understood what it was, how to use, what it can do, all in one glance.

Therefore, he without any hesitation, knowing that this was rank 4 dungeon, gave the ‘decisions’.

“Ah, I almost forgot it, Congratulations of the establishment of ‘The Fourth Laboratory’”

This was no more the unnamed new area within Media Ruins.

The disgusting laboratory, creating people like Kurono for Holy Soldier Project, the third laboratory, now had a new extension, in other words 『The Fourth Laboratory』 was established within the Pandora Continent.